

## Speakers of Lok Sabha



# SPEAKERS OF LOK SABHA

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Lok Sabha

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI  
2012

No. 9/I/PRIS (Parly.)/LARRDIS/12

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(Hindi Edition also available)

Price : ₹ 450.00/-

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Fourteenth Edition), and printed by Jainco Art India, 13/10, W.E.A. Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110 005.

## FOREWORD

The founding fathers of our Constitution had deeply appreciated the significance of the office of Speaker who occupies a pre-eminent position in our democratic polity. It was this recognition that guided them in establishing this august office which embodies the dignity and independence of the Lok Sabha.

The office of the Speaker has been playing a crucial role in initiating sound democratic traditions, rules, practices, customs and conventions which are fundamental to a healthy parliamentary culture. Apart from representing the collective wisdom of the House as a whole which comprises various political shades and regional hues, the Speaker protects and preserves the privileges of the individual members as also of the House.

The celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the first sitting of Parliament on 13 May 2012 is a watershed event in the annals of our parliamentary democracy. The Lok Sabha, in the six decades of its existence, has had a galaxy of speakers of great stature, vision and dynamism who lent dignity and prestige to the Chair. This publication, brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, is a tribute to the illustrious leaders who guided this institution through our modern parliamentary history.

New Delhi  
April 2012

MEIRA KUMAR (Smt.)  
*Speaker*  
*Lok Sabha*



## PREFACE

The Speaker is not only one of the highest constitutional functionaries in our country but is also the symbol of the dignity, independence and power of the House over which she or he presiding. It is in the Speaker that the responsibility of conducting the business of the House is invested. The maintenance of people's faith in the democratic institutions depends greatly on the way the Speaker conducts the proceedings of the House.

Throughout our parliamentary history, we have had many distinguished Speakers who brought honour to the Chair by creatively interpreting Constitutional provisions, Rules of Procedure and setting new precedents, conventions and practices for the effective functioning of Parliament.

This Volume, containing a brief introduction on the office of the Speaker and profiles of the Speakers since the First Lok Sabha, has been brought out to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the first sitting of Parliament held on 13 May 1952. It dwells on how our Parliament has marched ahead as the sheet-anchor of democracy during the last sixty years despite innumerable problems and challenges.

We are deeply grateful to the Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar, for her guidance in completing this Volume and also for the illuminating foreword that she has contributed.

It is hoped that this Publication would be found useful by all those who are interested in learning about the growth and evolution of parliamentary institutions in the country.

New Delhi  
April 2012

T.K. VISWANATHAN  
*Secretary-General  
Lok Sabha*





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# I

## THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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## THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

*T*he office of the Speaker occupies a pivotal position in our parliamentary polity. Responsibility of ensuring free and fair discussions on the floor of the House, an essential pre-requisite in any democracy, rests with the Speaker. It has been said of the office of the Speaker that while the members of Parliament represent the individual constituencies, the Speaker represents the full authority of the House itself. He symbolises the dignity and power of the House over which he is presiding. Therefore, it is expected that the holder of this august office is one who can represent the House in all its manifestations.

The responsibility entrusted to the Speaker is so onerous that he cannot afford to overlook any aspect of parliamentary life. His actions come under close scrutiny in the House and are also widely reported in the mass media. With the televising of proceedings of Parliament, the small screen brings to millions of households in the country the day-to-day developments in the House making the Speaker's task all the more important.

Even though the Speaker speaks rarely in the House, when he does, he speaks for the House as a whole. The Speaker is looked upon as the true guardian of the traditions of parliamentary democracy. His unique position is illustrated by the fact that he is placed very high in the Warrant of Precedence in our country, standing next only to the President, the Vice-President and the Prime Minister.

In India, through the Constitution of the land, through the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and through the practices and conventions, adequate powers are vested in the office of the Speaker to help him in the smooth conduct of the parliamentary proceedings and for protecting the independence and impartiality of the office. The Constitution of India provides that the Speaker's salary and allowances are not to be voted by Parliament and are to be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India.

## Election of Speaker

In the Lok Sabha, the House of the People of the Indian Parliament, both Presiding Officers—the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker—are elected from among its members by a simple majority of members present and voting in the House. As such, no specific qualifications are prescribed for being elected the Speaker. The Constitution only requires that he should be a member of the House. But an understanding of the Constitution and the laws of the country and the rules of procedure and conventions of Parliament is considered a major asset for the holder of the office of the Speaker.

The election of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is an important event in the life of the House. One of the first acts of a newly constituted House is to elect the Speaker. Usually, a member belonging to the ruling party is elected the Speaker. However, there are also instances when members not belonging to the ruling party or coalition were elected to the office of the Speaker. According to a healthy convention, which has evolved over the years, the ruling party nominates its candidate after informal consultations with the Leaders of other Parties and Groups in the House. This convention ensures that once elected, the Speaker enjoys the respect of all sections of the House.

Once a decision on the candidate is taken, his name is normally proposed by the Prime Minister or the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. If more than one notice is received, these are entered in the order of receipt. The Speaker *pro tem* presides over the sitting in which the Speaker is elected, if it is a newly constituted House. If the election falls later in the life of a Lok Sabha, the Deputy Speaker presides. The motions which are moved and duly seconded are put one by one in the order in which they are moved, and decided, if necessary, by division. If any motion is carried, the person presiding shall, without putting the latter motions, declare that the member proposed in the motion which has been carried, has been chosen as the Speaker of the House. After the results are announced, the Speaker-elect is conducted to the Chair by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. He is then felicitated by Leaders of all Political Parties and Groups in the House to which he replies in a thanks-giving speech. And from then, the new Speaker takes over.

## Speaker in the Chair

In the Lok Sabha Chamber, the Speaker's Chair is distinctively placed and, from his seat, he gets a commanding view of the entire House. Insofar as the proceedings are concerned, he is guided by the provisions of the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. He also benefits from the Directions issued by his predecessors which are compiled periodically. Besides, he is assisted by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha and senior officers of the Secretariat on parliamentary activities and on matters of practice and procedure.

In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker discharges his functions. A member from the Panel of Chairmen presides over the House in the absence of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker has extensive functions to perform in administrative, judicial and regulatory matters falling under his domain. He enjoys vast authority under the Constitution and the Rules, as well as inherently. As the conventional head of the Lok Sabha and as its principal spokesperson, the Speaker represents its collective voice. Of course, he is the ultimate arbiter and interpreter of those provisions which relate to the functioning of the House. His decisions are final and binding and ordinarily cannot be questioned, challenged or criticised.

## Speaker in the House

A sitting of the House is duly constituted only when it is chaired by the Speaker or any other member competent to preside under the Constitution. The House sits on such days as the Speaker may direct. He also determines the time when the House shall be adjourned *sine die*, or to a particular day, or to an hour or part of the same day. The arrangement of Government business is decided by the Speaker in consultation with the Leader of the House. A question can be asked in the House, a matter raised, a discussion undertaken, nay any business can take place only with the prior permission of the Speaker.

## Regulating the Business of the House

The final authority for adopting rules for regulating its procedure rests with each House, but a perusal of the rules of

the Indian Parliament would indicate that the Presiding Officers in the two Houses are given vast powers by the rules. It is the Presiding Officer who decides the admissibility of a Question; it is he who decides the forms in which amendments may be moved to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address. With regard to moving amendment to a Bill, the permission of the Chair is required. If a Bill is pending before the House, it is the Speaker who decides whether he should allow amendments to be moved to various clauses of the Bill or not.

As regards regulating discussions in the House, it is the Speaker who decides as to when a member shall speak and how long he shall speak. It is left to him to ask a member to discontinue his speech or even decide that what a particular member said may not go on record as part of the proceedings. If he is satisfied, the Speaker can direct a member to withdraw from the House for a specific period of time. A member who flouts his orders or directions may be named by the Speaker and in such cases, he may have to withdraw from the House.

The Speaker is the guardian of the rights and privileges of the House, its Committees and members. It depends solely on the Speaker to refer any question of privilege to the Committee of Privileges for examination, investigation and report. It is through him that the decisions of the House are communicated to outside individuals and authorities. It is the Speaker who decides the form and manner in which the proceedings of the House are published. He also issues warrants to execute the orders of the House, wherever necessary, and delivers reprimands on behalf of the House. The entire Parliamentary Estate is under the authority of the Speaker.

When a decision of the House is to be ascertained on a motion made by a member, the question is put by the Speaker before the House to obtain the decision. On questions of points of order, it is he who finally decides whether the matter raised is in order or not.

The Speaker also has certain residuary powers under the Rules of Procedure. All matters which are not specifically provided under the rules and all questions relating to the working of the rules are regulated by him. In exercise of this power and under his inherent powers, the Speaker issues from time to time directions which are



generally treated as sacrosanct as the Rules of Procedure. On matters regarding interpretation of constitutional provisions relating to the House or the Rules of Procedure, he often gives rulings which are respected by members and are binding in nature.

Under the Constitution, the Speaker enjoys a special position insofar as certain matters pertaining to the relations between the two Houses of Parliament are concerned. He certifies Money Bills and decides finally what are money matters by reason of the Lok Sabha's overriding powers in financial matters. It is the Speaker of the Lok Sabha who presides over joint sittings called in the event of disagreement between the two Houses on a legislative measure.

As regards recognition of parliamentary parties, it is the Speaker who lays down the necessary guidelines for such recognition. It is he who decides on granting recognition to the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Following the 52nd Constitution amendment, the Speaker is vested with the power relating to the disqualification of a member of the Lok Sabha on grounds of defection.

The Speaker makes obituary references in the House, formal references to important national and international events and the valedictory address at the conclusion of every Session of the Lok Sabha and also when the term of the House expires.

Though himself a member of the House, the Speaker does not vote in the House except on those rare occasions when there is a tie at the end of a decision. Till date, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha has not been called upon to exercise this unique casting vote.

### Speaker and the Committees

The Committees of the House function under the overall direction of the Speaker. All such Committees are constituted by him or by the House. The Chairmen of all Parliamentary Committees are nominated by him. Any procedural problems in the functioning of the Committees are referred to him for directions. Committees like the Business Advisory Committee, the General Purposes Committee and the Rules Committee work directly under his Chairmanship.

## Speaker and Inter-Parliamentary Relations

The Speaker has certain other functions to perform as the head of the Lok Sabha. He is the *ex officio* President of the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG), set up in 1949, which functions as the National Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Main Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). In that capacity, members of various Indian Parliamentary Delegations going abroad are nominated by him after consulting the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Most often, the Speaker himself leads such Delegations. Besides, he is the Chairman of the Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India.

## Speaker's Administrative Role

The Speaker heads the Lok Sabha Secretariat which functions under his control and direction. The admission of visitors and Press Correspondents to the Galleries are regulated by him. All security arrangements in the Parliament precincts are under his direct control.

## Term of Office

The Speaker holds office from the date of his election till immediately before the first meeting of the Lok Sabha after the dissolution of the one to which he was elected. He is eligible for re-election. On the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, although the Speaker ceases to be a member of the House, he does not vacate his office.

The Speaker may, at any time, resign from office by writing under his hand to the Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker can be removed from office only on a resolution of the House passed by a majority of all the then members of the House. Such a resolution has to satisfy some conditions like: it should be specific with respect to the charges and it should not contain arguments, inferences, ironical expressions, imputations or defamatory statements, etc. Not only these, discussions should be confined to charges referred to in the resolution. It is also mandatory to give a minimum of 14 days' notice of the intention to move the resolution.

## Speaker and Members

The Speaker is at once a member of the House as also its Presiding Officer. It is always the Speaker's task to ensure that parliamentary decorum is maintained under all circumstances. For this he is invested with wide-ranging disciplinary powers under the rules. On the one hand, he strives to give adequate opportunities to all sections of the House to ventilate their views and on the other, he has to preserve the dignity of the House. The Speaker's position in such situations is certainly unenviable. It is indeed a delicate task which calls for diplomacy, firmness, persuasion and perseverance of a high order.

The Speaker also keeps open a variety of informal channels of communication with individual members and the Leaders of Parties and Groups in the Lok Sabha. He interacts with Leaders of Parliamentary Parties at luncheon meetings on the eve of and even during every Session. These are important occasions when he gets to know the mood of various parties on a wide range of issues. The Speaker has to ensure that Parliament functions the way that it is intended to under the Constitution. All in all, it is always a tight-rope walk for the Speaker.

## Speaker and Party Politics

The Speaker is above the party politics. A special provision has been made in the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution to enable a person who has been elected to the Office of the Speaker to sever his connections with the political party to which he belonged and to rejoin it when he ceases to hold that office without incurring disqualification. However, the Speaker gets elected to the Lok Sabha on a party ticket. He may or may not continue to be the member of his party after his election as Speaker. Even when he does not sever connections with his party, he has refrained from attending any party meeting. However, a convention has, more or less, developed at the Union for the Speaker to dissociate himself from his party. The successive Speakers have affirmed that they belonged to the whole House and not to a particular party. They also refrained from attending any party meetings while holding the office.

## A day in the life of the Speaker

The Speaker has a hectic schedule, whether the House is in Session or not. A typical day in his life begins with meeting visitors at his official residence at 20, Akbar Road, in New Delhi. When the House is in Session, he is responsible for all matters pertaining to the business of the House. Though the House begins with the Question Hour at 1100 hours in the morning, he reaches Parliament House well in advance. Right through the day, he is in and out of the House, keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings. Ordinarily, the House is expected to adjourn for the day at 1800 hours in the evening. More often than not, the sitting continues till late in the night, necessitating the presence of the Speaker.

The Speaker's day is not confined merely to presiding over the House. He has to attend to various other duties in connection with the functioning of the House. In addition to attending to the work of the Committees, of which he himself is the Chairman, he has also to meet Leaders of Parties and Groups, individual members, etc. Very often, visiting Parliamentary Delegations call on him and discuss matters of parliamentary interest and bilateral concern. Subjects of global interest also crop up during these discussions. As per protocol, these Parliamentary Delegations are guests of honour at banquets hosted by the Speaker. Visiting foreign dignitaries also call on the Speaker and exchange views with him on diverse subjects. Besides, he has to find time to look into the working of the Lok Sabha Secretariat which he heads. In this task, he is assisted by the Secretary-General and senior officers of the Secretariat.

This does not mean that when the House is not in Session, the Speaker has a relatively easy time. A flurry of activity keeps him busy even during inter-session days. There is a steady stream of visiting dignitaries, foreign Parliamentary Delegations, political leaders, academicians, journalists, all wanting to discuss with him matters of topical concern. It is normally during this time that Indian Parliamentary Delegations go abroad and generally he has to lead such Delegations. He also often heads the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Conferences, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences, the Conferences of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians and the Conferences of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers.

The Speaker is very much in demand to deliver Convocation Addresses, inaugurate Seminars and Symposia, preside over a multitude of important functions and attend to all kinds of requests from charitable organisations. He is also flooded with requests for messages of goodwill from numerous organisations. In between, he has to find time to attend to his own constituency and constituents, not to forget his personal life.

The office of the Speaker in India is a living and dynamic institution which deals with the actual needs and problems and difficulties of Parliament in the performance of its functions. The Speaker is the constitutional and ceremonial head of the House. He is the principal spokesman of the House. It is in him that the responsibility of conducting the business of the House in a manner befitting the place of the institution in a representative democracy is invested. The founding fathers of our Constitution had recognised the importance of this office in our democratic set-up and it was this recognition that guided them in establishing this office as one of the prominent and dignified ones in the scheme of governance of the country.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the chief architects of India's freedom and a moving force behind its Constitution, placed the office of the Speaker in India in the proper context when he said:

The Speaker represents the House. He represents the dignity of the House, the freedom of the House and because the House represents the nation, in a particular way, the Speaker becomes a symbol of nation's freedom and liberty. Therefore, it is right that, that should be an honoured position, a free position and should be occupied always by men of outstanding ability and impartiality.

This would explain why this office still remains one of the most crucial ones in the life of every Lok Sabha.



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## II

## THE SPEAKERS OF LOK SABHA

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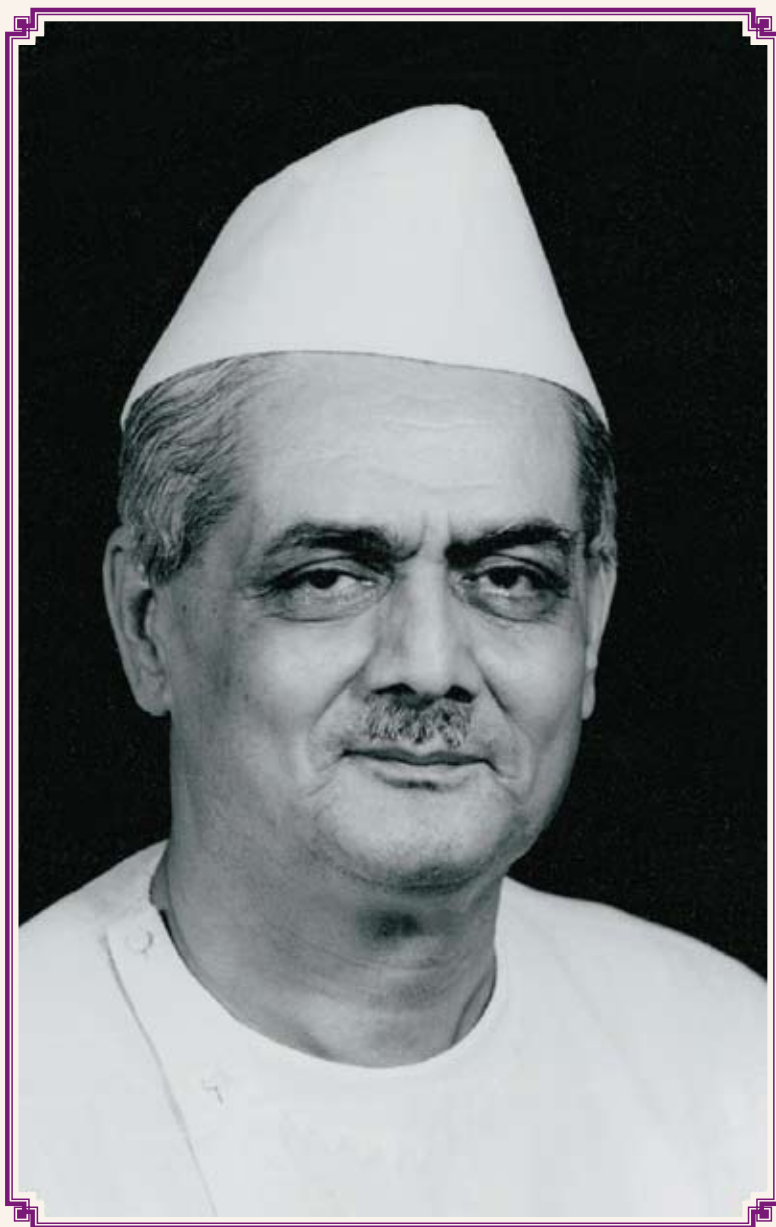


# 1

## G.V. MAVALANKAR

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If anyone asks whose Speakership made its greatest impact on our parliamentary institutions, unquestionably the answer would be, Shri Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar, fondly remembered as Dadasaheb Mavalankar on whom the title 'Father of the Lok Sabha' was conferred by none other than Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. As Speaker of the First Lok Sabha of a new-born nation, Mavalankar's role was not merely that of a moderator and facilitator of its proceedings but of a Statesman and a founding father invested with the responsibility to establish rules, procedures, conventions and customs that suited the ethos of the land. He accomplished all this with patience, perseverance, wisdom and above all with a remarkable sense of history. He observed the decorum of the House and also enforced it on others. He was, undoubtedly, a model Speaker, firm yet flexible, stern yet kind and sympathetic and always fair to all sections of the House.



**G.V. MAVALANKAR**  
(15 May 1952—27 February 1956)

**G**anesh Vasudev Mavalankar was born on 27 November 1888 at Baroda, presently part of the State of Gujarat. His family originally belonged to a place called Mavalange in the Ratnagiri District of the then State of Bombay. After his early education in different places in the erstwhile Bombay State, Mavalankar moved to Ahmedabad in 1902 for higher studies. He obtained his B.A. degree in Science from the Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, in 1908. He was a Dakshina Fellow of the College for one year in 1909 before taking to his law studies. He passed his Law examination in First Class in 1912.

Entering the legal profession in 1913, Mavalankar established himself as a leading lawyer within a short time. Along with his flourishing legal practice, he took keen interest in social work which brought him in contact with eminent national leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahatma Gandhi. Even from his early twenties, Mavalankar was associated with several major social organisations in Gujarat, either as an office bearer or as an activist. He was the Honorary Secretary of the Gujarat Education Society in 1913 as also the Secretary of the Gujarat Sabha in 1916.

From a very early age itself, Mavalankar began to be actively associated with the Indian National Congress, which was spearheading the movement for national freedom under the leadership of Gandhiji. He played an active role in the freedom movement in Gujarat in the Thirties and the Forties. In the course of the movement, he was imprisoned several times and spent nearly six years in jail. Whenever there was a natural calamity, famine or other social or political crisis, Mavalankar came forward to help the people, totally suspending his lucrative legal practice. Recognising his leadership qualities and contributions, he was appointed Secretary of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee during 1921-22. He was also the General Secretary of the Reception Committee for the 36th Session of the Indian National Congress held in Ahmedabad in December 1921. He played a very active part in the 'Khaira No-Rent' campaign and later in the famine and flood relief works on several occasions.

A firm believer in the decentralisation of power and in the efficacy of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Mavalankar dedicated himself to the affairs of Ahmedabad Municipality for nearly two decades.

From 1919 to 1937, he remained a member of the Ahmedabad Municipality. Twice, during 1930-33 and 1935-36, he served as its President. Ahmedabad made tremendous progress during his stewardship. His interest in the affairs of the local self-government bodies continued throughout his life.

Mavalankar was the founder-Chairman of the National Rifle Association as also of the Institute for Afro-Asian Relations. He took great interest in educational and literary activities in Gujarat. For sometime, he worked as Professor of Law at the Gujarat Vidyapeeth. He was also a founder-member and later the President of the Ahmedabad Education Society and the President of the Gujarat Vernacular Society. Other Societies he was associated with in various capacities included the Gujarat Law Society, and the Charotar Education Society. He was the Working Chairman of the Gujarat University Association and also Chairman of the Committee for Gujarat University and in these capacities he strove hard to mobilise the finances and other infrastructure for the Gujarat University.

Mavalankar had many literary accomplishments to his credit. His book in Gujarati *Manavatana Jharna* containing some true stories about the prisoners he had met and guided while he was in jail from 1942 to 1944, in the course of the freedom movement, has been very popular. This was later rendered into a few other Indian languages as well. Another book in Gujarati, *Sansmarano* was devoted to giving his reminiscences of association with Gandhiji. The English book *My Life at the Bar* contains reminiscences of his nearly two and a half decades long active life at the Bar.

Mavalankar's legislative career began in 1937, when he was elected to the then Bombay Legislative Assembly representing the city of Ahmedabad. With his standing as an eminent lawyer and with his quarter century long experience in diverse capacities in the service of the people of Gujarat, Mavalankar was the immediate choice of the Assembly to be its Speaker. Thus, he had the distinction of starting his legislative career occupying the office of the Speaker itself. Years later, this was to be repeated at the national level also, when he was elected to preside over the Central Legislative Assembly in 1946. Mavalankar remained Speaker of the Bombay Legislative Assembly from 1937 to 1946.

His success as the Speaker of the Bombay Legislative Assembly made him a natural choice of the Congress Party for the Presidentship of the Sixth Central Legislative Assembly in January 1946.

The nomination by the Opposition Congress Party in itself was not enough to ensure his election in an Assembly in which the majority of members was on the Government side which had put up its own candidate. However, after a keenly contested election, Mavalankar emerged victorious. This only proved his popularity among the members of the Assembly cutting across party lines.

Mavalankar remained Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly till the midnight of August 14-15, 1947 when, under the Indian Independence Act, 1947, the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of States ceased to exist and the Constituent Assembly of India assumed full powers for the governance of the country. In the wake of India's Independence, Mavalankar headed the Committee constituted on 20 August 1947 to study and report on the need to separate the Constitution-making role of the Constituent Assembly from its legislative role. Later, it was on this Committee's recommendation that the legislative and Constitution-making roles of the Assembly were separated and it was decided to have a Speaker to preside over the Assembly when it functioned as the legislative body for the country. Here again, the choice of the person to preside over the Session of the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) fell on Mavalankar, and accordingly he was elected to the office on 17 November 1947.

With the adoption of the Constitution of free India on 26 November 1949, and the consequent change in the nomenclature of the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) into that of the Provisional Parliament, there was a corresponding change in the status of Mavalankar also. Mavalankar thus became the Speaker of the Provisional Parliament on 26 November 1949.

Mavalankar continued to occupy the office of the Speaker throughout the Provisional Parliament, *i.e.* till the First Lok Sabha was constituted in 1952. This period, in fact, represented a very crucial phase in the history of the Indian Legislature as it was to oversee the process of transition from a colonial institution into a sovereign Parliament under the Constitution of Independent India. Also, it marked the beginning of a new era of fully responsible Government.

Compatible with its new status, several procedural innovations and modifications were required to be introduced into the functioning of Parliament. It was principally Speaker Mavalankar's job to be

the harbinger as also the facilitator of these changes. Mavalankar did not belie the expectations of the Parliament and the country at large on him. By the time the process of elections to the First Lok Sabha was completed in the country in 1951-52, Mavalankar was ready with rules, practices, procedures and conventions necessary for the smooth functioning of a representative Parliament in the country. No one was, therefore, surprised when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru proposed the name of Mavalankar to be chosen as the Speaker of the First Lok Sabha of Independent India on 15 May 1952 and the House carried the proposal with 394 votes, against the opponent's 55.

In the next four years when Mavalankar presided over the Lok Sabha, the country was to witness his unique qualities as an institution-builder. Because he could link the past precedents with the fresh needs and effect changes while maintaining continuity, his period of Speakership was the most fruitful one for the evolution of parliamentary procedures in India. Not only did he introduce several new rules and procedures, he also modified the existing ones to suit the new conditions. On his initiative, the 'Question Hour' in its modern sense of the term became a regular and meaningful feature of parliamentary Sessions. Devices like 'Short Notice Questions' and 'Half-an-Hour Discussions' were introduced as means to elicit information from the Government and thereby to make the Government truly accountable to the Parliament. The entire legislative procedures underwent drastic changes under his initiative to make it truly democratic in tune with the changing times. The discussion on 'President's Address' on a 'Motion of Thanks' was started by Speaker Mavalankar. Similarly, the rules governing the composition and procedure of Parliamentary Committees were amended under his guidance and direction, to make them adjust to the new political situation. Also a number of new Committees were set up.

Committees like the Rules Committee, the Committee of Privileges, the Business Advisory Committee, Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions, Committee on Subordinate Legislation, Committee on Government Assurances, Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House, Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament, General Purposes Committee, *etc.* were introduced in the

Indian Parliament on Speaker Mavalankar's initiative. He also took various measures to revamp the existing Committees and to make them relevant to the times.

Several of the rulings delivered by Mavalankar were of far-reaching importance in the running of not only of the House but even of other democratic institutions in the country. In fact, his rulings provided the basis for many entries in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. Several important procedural points were settled and principles were laid down during his Speakership by prudently exercising his discretion to rule on issues that came up before him. And these issues actually covered almost the entire gamut of parliamentary activities and in a way the national life itself.

In spite of having to attend to numerous items of parliamentary work within the country, Speaker Mavalankar did not overlook the importance of maintaining an active inter-parliamentary contact and cooperation between the Parliament of India and other individual Parliaments and international parliamentary Associations. With the objective of nurturing and cementing Indian Parliament's relationship with other Parliaments, Mavalankar encouraged and facilitated mutual exchange of Delegations between Parliaments. He himself led several such Delegations and received many in India. He also attended many of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conferences held in various parts of the world during his Speakership. He represented India at the opening ceremony of the new House of Commons in London on 26 October 1950. And in 1953, he attended the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and also a meeting of the Central Council of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in London at that time.

The practice of organising the Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India received great encouragement and support from Mavalankar. From the time he took over the Presidentship of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1946 till his death in 1956, Speaker Mavalankar remained the President of this important Conference. These Conferences provided opportunities to all the Presiding Officers of the Legislatures in the country for the exchange of experiences and views and for evolving certain uniform practices and procedures as also for building up healthy

and valuable conventions of parliamentary democracy throughout the country.

Yet another area that received Mavalankar's special attention as the Speaker of the First Lok Sabha was the Secretariat of the Lok Sabha. Mavalankar was very clear in his thought that it was most crucial for the assertion of the independence and supremacy of Parliament in our system of government, to maintain an independent Secretariat of Parliament directly under the control of the Presiding Officers. He firmly believed that the "Speaker as representative and head of the Legislature, must have the help and advice of people who do not feel themselves suppressed because of the powers of the executive Government, who will give advice and put through the work irrespective of frowns and favours". According to him, officers in the service of Parliament Secretariat were to be guided only by the principles of freedom, faith, objectivity and promptitude.

Mavalankar also was very anxious to provide to members of Parliament a suitable working atmosphere and, therefore, maximum possible facilities to work were sought to be provided in order that members could become effective parliamentarians. He believed that objective and prompt information was an essential input for a parliamentarian. It was this realisation that motivated him in setting up a full-fledged Research and Reference Service in Parliament as part of the Lok Sabha Secretariat itself. He also took utmost interest in improving the Library facilities for members.

So long as he remained the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Mavalankar did not take any active interest in politics, even though he did not sever his linkages with the Indian National Congress. This linkage, however, did not affect his own conduct in Parliament. He remained non-partisan and as such earned the admiration and respect of the entire House althrough his Speakership.

Mavalankar's Speakership was cut short abruptly by his untimely death in early 1956. Even while serving as Speaker, Mavalankar continued to be associated with a number of other organisations and trusts devoted to social service, rural uplift and development of the underprivileged classes in various capacities. They included the Harijan Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi at Sabarmati, the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund and the Gandhi Memorial Trust. In December 1950, Mavalankar succeeded Sardar Patel as the



Chairman of the Gandhi Memorial Trust. Work in connection with the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund and the Gandhi Memorial Trust took Mavalankar to all parts of India, as he was anxious to personally see the working of all Centres and meet the ordinary workers. Even considerations of his own health and personal comforts did not deter him from undertaking long and arduous journeys. During the course of one such journey in January 1956, Mavalankar suffered a cardiac arrest and eventually, on 27 February 1956, breathed his last in Ahmedabad.

On his death, a grateful nation and its Parliament paid rich tributes to its distinguished Speaker who, along with other founders of the Republic, laid solid foundations for parliamentary democracy in India. Through five decades of selfless service, Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar left a deep imprint of his personality in every area he was associated with. Unquestionably the greatest impact has been on the office of the Speaker and on Parliament.

For a period of over ten years (1946-1956), Mavalankar guided the deliberations of India's Parliament with dignity, uprightness and impartiality. On the independent role and functions of the office of the Speaker, on the need to maintain an independent Legislature Secretariat accountable only to the Speaker, on the question of privileges of people's representatives, on the need to have Parliamentary Committees to scrutinise public expenditure, on the imperative to demonstrate decorum and dignity in the functioning of Parliament, and on all other basic and fundamental norms of parliamentary government, Speaker Mavalankar had very clear perceptions and did not spare any effort in making them an integral part of the system. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India and the Leader of the House Mavalankar presided over, described him as the 'Father of the Lok Sabha', probably he was echoing the sentiments of the whole nation. And when the stalwarts of the Opposition, many of whom could match the stature and calibre of those in the ruling benches, described him as the 'sheet anchor of parliamentary democracy' and as a 'genuine custodian of the rights of the Opposition', it was evidently a tribute paid to the office of the Speaker itself and to the statesmanship of Dadasaheb Mavalankar.

## 2

### M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR

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Stepping in to fill the void created by the sudden demise of G.V. Mavalankar, the first Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar proved himself well suited to carry on the unfinished task of consolidating the gains of freedom and of evolving a healthy parliamentary culture in the new Republic. Through a public life spanning over six decades, as a lawyer, as a social activist and freedom fighter, as an outstanding parliamentarian and Speaker and as a distinguished scholar, Ayyangar left an indelible imprint of his personality in every area he chose to tread on in life.



M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR  
(8 March 1956—10 May 1957  
and  
11 May 1957—16 April 1962)

**M**adabhooshi Ananthasayanam Ayyangar was born on 4 February 1891 at Tiruchanur near the spiritual town of Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. After completing his initial education in the Devasthanam High School at Tirupati, Ayyangar moved to Madras for higher studies. After obtaining his B.A. degree from the Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, he earned a degree in Law from the Madras Law College in 1913.

Ayyangar began his career as a Mathematics teacher in 1912. In 1915 he ventured into the legal profession. Within a short period, he established himself as a professional lawyer and, with his unusual ability to memorise cases, soon earned the reputation of being a 'walking digest of case laws'. Ayyangar did not treat the profession only as a means to earn his livelihood. He was deeply interested in improving the judicial system of the country to suit the needs of the people of India rather than see it as an extension of the British judicial system. He, therefore, strongly advocated independence of the Judiciary and urged the Government of India to raise the status of the Federal Court to that of a Supreme Court. He was very much concerned about the humiliation as also the hardships faced by the Indian people due to the vesting of the ultimate appellate authority of India's judicial system in the hands of the Privy Council in England. An activist lawyer, Ayyangar was also the President of the Bar Association of Chittoor, his home town.

Ayyangar was drawn into the freedom movement at a very early age. Within his home State, he was one of the leading figures of the Indian National Congress which was spearheading the National Movement against British colonialism. Responding to Gandhiji's call for 'Non-cooperation' with the British establishment, Ayyangar suspended his legal practice for one year during 1921-22.

When the Congress withdrew its policy of boycott of Councils and decided to contest the elections for the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934, Ayyangar was elected to the House with an overwhelming majority. The objective of the Congress in contesting the election was to fight the Government from within. Well-equipped with facts and figures and by his innate debating skills, Ayyangar

soon made his mark as a forceful debater in the Assembly. From the back benches, he moved on to the front benches and then came a time when not a single day passed without his saying something forceful in the Assembly against the Government and in the interests of the Congress and the National Movement. This remarkable performance of Ayyangar in the Assembly provoked a European writer to refer to him as the 'Emden of the Assembly', alluding to the German submarine of that name, which caused untold havoc to the Allied Navy in the early days of the Second World War.

Between 1940 and 1944 Ayyangar suffered imprisonment for nearly three years, first for taking part in the 'Individual Satyagraha Campaign' and later in the 'Quit India Movement' of 1942.

Apart from taking active part in the movement for political freedom for the country, Ayyangar was involved in various other activities directed towards the social emancipation of the downtrodden sections of the society. Inspired by Gandhiji's constructive programmes for fighting social evils like untouchability, Ayyangar was in the forefront of such movements launched to ensure temple entry for the Harijans and the abolition of untouchability in his home State. Later, in his capacity as the President of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Ayyangar initiated several programmes for the economic and social uplift of the *Harijans*.

He also took keen interest in the co-operative movement and in the activities of the local-self Government institutions in Chittoor. In fact, his first exposure to a representative institution was with the Municipal Council of Chittoor, to which he was once elected during the early days of his political career. Later, he was elected Director of the Co-operative District Bank of Chittoor.

Ayyangar was one of the top-ranking leaders of the Congress Party in Andhra Pradesh and held several important positions in the Party before Independence. He served as President, District Congress Committee, Chittoor. Subsequently, he was nominated to the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and the All India Congress Committee. During 1946-47, he was also the Secretary of the Congress Party in Parliament.

Ayyangar served as a member of the Constituent Assembly. In the wake of the decision to separate the Constitution-making functions of the Constituent Assembly from its legislative functions

and the consequent election of G.V. Mavalankar as the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly (Legislative), Ayyangar was chosen to be its Deputy Speaker. He also served in the Steering Committee of the Constituent Assembly. During 1950-52, Ayyangar continued to be the Deputy Speaker of the Provisional Parliament. When an Estimates Committee was constituted for the first time by the Provisional Parliament in 1950, Ayyangar was the choice to be its Chairman. He skilfully conducted its meetings and established a name for the Committee.

When the First Lok Sabha was constituted in 1952, Ayyangar was the unanimous choice to be its Deputy Speaker. While discharging his duties as the Deputy Speaker, Ayyangar had the added responsibility of being the Chairman of the Estimates Committee of the Lok Sabha for two more years and that of heading the Railway Convention Committee in the next two years until he was elected unanimously to preside over the Lok Sabha on 8 March 1956, on Speaker Mavalankar's sudden demise.

Thus, coming to occupy the exalted office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha was a culmination of a legislative career which began with the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934. By now Ayyangar had already proved himself to be a very articulate and effective parliamentarian with a rich fund of experience and knowledge of the working of parliamentary institutions and their practices and procedures. He was deeply committed to upholding the parliamentary norms, and was endowed with a tremendous sense of humour which not only helped enliven parliamentary proceedings but also at times enabled him to make a point more forcefully and at the same time pleasantly on the floor of Parliament.

During his brief tenure as the Speaker of the First Lok Sabha, Ayyangar had proved himself a worthy inheritor of the high traditions in parliamentary life established by Speaker Mavalankar. From the very beginning, it was Ayyangar's constant endeavour to uphold and fortify the traditions and conventions already brought into India's parliamentary system. Through his objective and unbiased conduct, he endeared himself to all sections of the House. Though there was no official Leader of the Opposition in the House, Ayyangar treated the stalwarts of the Opposition with the respect and regard due to them and always sought to ensure a balance between the Government and the Opposition. When the Second Lok Sabha

was constituted in 1957, Ayyangar was once again the unanimous choice of the House to be its Speaker for the next five years.

The innumerable rulings and observations made by Ayyangar as Speaker would amply demonstrate his political vision, legal acumen, mastery of and respect for the parliamentary procedures, understanding of the dynamics of governance and identification with the larger problems and causes of the country. On the points raised before him, he ruled with precision and clarity. To his credit are a number of Rulings and Directions which settled many complex parliamentary issues in those formative years of the Indian Republic.

Ayyangar's observations on Adjournment Motions, Bills, Resolutions, Standing Committees, Calling Attention Notices, etc. are today integral part of the large volume of settled parliamentary practices and procedures in India. His rulings on the subject of Questions, Quorum and policy statements being made by Ministers outside the House when the House is in Session, have been pace-setting. Ayyangar clearly laid down the rule that as a matter of courtesy to the House, all enunciations of policy or change of policy or announcements of new policy must first be brought to the notice of the House while the House was in Session. He was firm in dealing with members on issues which had a bearing on the decorum in the House or respect to the Chair.

The issue of Indian Parliament's relations with other Parliaments of the world also received Ayyangar's special attention. For this purpose he led several Parliamentary Delegations to other countries and to the Conferences of International Parliamentary Associations. He was the Leader of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the 49th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Tokyo in 1960. He also took keen interest in the Conferences of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India. He saw in these Conferences opportunities to evolve uniform practices and procedures in the Indian Legislatures and to discuss matters of common parliamentary interest.

While remaining an active parliamentarian, and in later years, after leaving active political life, Ayyangar continued to be associated with a large number of socio-cultural and educational organisations.

These organisations included the *Harijan Sevak Sangh*, the *Ram Vilas Sabha*, the Dramatic Associations of Chittoor, the Constitution Club, and the Indian Association of World Federal Government.

Ayyangar was elected to the Lok Sabha for the third time in the General Elections of 1962. However, he resigned his membership soon after the elections to serve as the Governor of Bihar. That was to mark the end of the nearly three decade-long distinguished parliamentary career. Undoubtedly, through this long period of service, the institution of Parliament and the country in general benefited enormously from Ayyangar's knowledge, his parliamentary skill and his broad vision of politics, religion and of national problems.

The encomiums showered on Ayyangar on relinquishing the office of the Speaker in 1962 echoed the glowing tributes paid to Dadasaheb Mavalankar in 1956. It was between these two distinguished Speakers that the foundations of a strong and healthy parliamentary culture were laid in India. India's democratic institutions owe a great deal to their unqualified commitment to parliamentary institutions, to their alertness in upholding the dignity of the House, the prestige of the members and the values of parliamentary democracy and to their relentless efforts in evolving sound parliamentary procedures and practices.

After parliamentary life, Ayyangar's greatest contribution, perhaps, was in the field of education. An erudite scholar, Ayyangar was an authority on Indology, Comparative Religion, Philosophy, Sanskrit, Sanskrit Literature and on a wide variety of other subjects. Throughout his life, he took great interest in the study and propagation of Sanskrit and Indian Culture. He served for sometime as a Member of the Central Advisory Board of Education and later as the Chancellor of the Rishikul University at Hardwar. Recognising his contributions to the field of learning, he was conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature by the Shri Vaishnava Theological University, Brindavan, in 1954. Besides regularly editing a Telugu weekly *Sri Venkatesa Patrika*, Ayyangar also had a book on Indian Parliament, *Our Parliament*, to his credit.

Ayyangar believed in the essential unity of mankind and was an advocate of secularism and a champion of the cause of religious unity in the country. He was greatly pained by the communal



feelings spreading and the misuse of religion for political purposes. He believed that the best way of sensitizing people against the dangers of communalism was by creating mass awareness about the true content of all religions. According to him, religions evolved primarily to help remove differences between man and man and to inculcate the feeling of brotherhood in man and thereby to elevate him.

Equally significant were his views on the pernicious caste system in the country. Ayyangar was one of the earliest national leaders during the struggle for Independence to join the fight against the evils of untouchability and caste system. He believed that historically caste system was not an original part of the Indian social fabric but rather only a later addition to it. According to Ayyangar, there was no such thing as a high caste or a low caste but only a higher state of consciousness and a lower state of consciousness, neither of which had anything to do with birth. He was convinced that the denial of the right of worship to anyone on the basis of his birth was an offence against divinity itself. It was this belief that motivated him to support the claim of the Dalits for entry into the Hindu temples. During the days of the freedom struggle he was one of the best known fighters for the uplift of the *Harijans*.

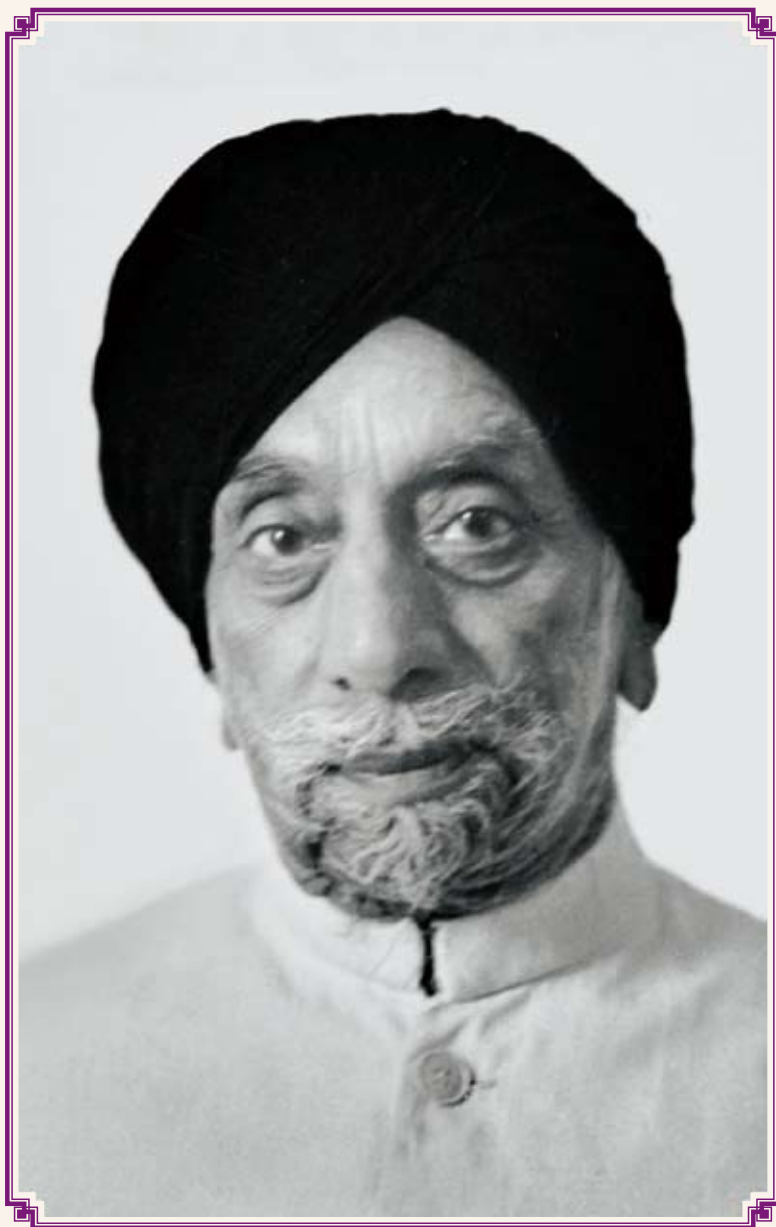
After serving a full term as the Governor of Bihar, Ayyangar retired from active political life and returned to his hometown, Tirupati, to spend the evening of his life. Even at this stage, Ayyangar remained very active. Work for the Sanskrit Vidyapeeth at Tirupati and several charitable organisations kept Ananthasayanam Ayyangar busy till he breathed his last on 19 March 1978, at the age of 87.

# 3

## SARDAR HUKAM SINGH

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Unanimously elected as the Speaker of the Third Lok Sabha, Sardar Hukam Singh endeavoured to follow and enforce the rules, procedures, practices and conventions of the House. His legal background and a stint as a Judge stood him in good stead in the years that he occupied the office of the Deputy Speaker and later the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Suave and soft spoken but firm and forthright, he was widely acclaimed and respected for his clarity of thought, fairness and charming personality. He strove hard to facilitate smooth and orderly conduct of the business of the House; at the same time, he also made sure that members got every opportunity to perform their grievance redressal role to the maximum extent possible.



**SARDAR HUKAM SINGH**  
(17 April 1962—16 March 1967)

**H**ukam Singh was born on 30 August 1895 at Montgomery, now a part of Pakistan. After the completion of his matriculation from the Government High School, Montgomery, Hukam Singh did his graduation from the Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1917. Thereafter, he studied Law at the Law College, Lahore and after passing out in 1921, started practising in his home town Montgomery. He was the President of the Montgomery Bar Association for a number of years.

Hukam Singh was initiated into politics through the Shiromani Akali Dal and was its President for three years. He was also a member of the Montgomery Singh Sabha and its President for three years. Hukam Singh was arrested in 1924 in connection with the Gurudwara Reform Movement and was sentenced to about two years of imprisonment.

Partition forced Hukam Singh to cross over to India in August 1947. He became a refugee overnight. However, his talents were soon recognised and he was appointed Puisne Judge of the State High Court, Kapurthala in December 1947, a post which he held till November 1948.

Hukam Singh was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India in April 1948 as a member of the Akali Dal. He was also a member of the Provisional Parliament (1950-52) and was later elected to the First Lok Sabha in 1952 from PEPSU constituency, representing the Akali Party. His name was placed in the Panel of Chairmen by the then Speaker G.V. Mavalankar. The way he conducted the proceedings of the House whenever such opportunity came his way was admired by all cutting across party lines. On 20 March 1956, Hukam Singh was unanimously elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha even when he was a member of the Opposition. This was a testimony to not only his popularity but also confidence of the members in his ability to run the House in an efficient and impartial manner.

Hukam Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha for the second time in 1957 from the Bhatinda parliamentary constituency. He was re-elected as Deputy Speaker on 17 May 1957. He also functioned

as the Chairman of the Committee of Privileges, Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions, Library Committee and Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

In the General Elections held in 1962, Hukam Singh was returned for the third time to the Lok Sabha, this time on a Congress ticket from the Patiala parliamentary constituency. His credentials having been tested and fully confirmed, it was only natural that Hukam Singh was unanimously elected as the Speaker of the Third Lok Sabha. It was the considered view of the House that the office of the Speaker was safe in the hands of Hukam Singh who could zealously uphold the dignity of Parliament and the rights and privileges of its members.

A democrat as he was, Hukam Singh believed that for the proper functioning of parliamentary democracy it was necessary that the members conducted themselves in the House in a dignified manner. He felt that it was also essential that the freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution was used in a proper fashion. Therefore, he had his own plan to enforce discipline on those who erred. It was his view that if a member stood up and began speaking without being identified by the Chair, he would not catch the Speaker's eye. If the member persisted in continuing, he would not catch the Speaker's eye in future also. In extreme cases, the Speaker would instruct the reporters not to record such speeches. Such was his conviction in maintaining discipline and decorum inside the House.

As Speaker, Hukam Singh was convinced of the importance of the rules and conventions in ensuring a smooth functioning of the House. He had a progressive bend of mind and was always in search of methods and devices to improve the effectiveness of the House. When the Third Lok Sabha met, he suggested to the House that a convention might be established not to move any adjournment motion on the day the President addressed members of both the Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Central Hall. The House approved the suggestion and it was agreed that the adjournment motion tabled, if any, might be taken up the next day. As Speaker, Hukam Singh also tried to dispose of all the Calling Attention Notices on the day on which they were tabled.

Hukam Singh firmly upheld the supremacy of the Legislature *vis-a-vis* the Executive. On 28 April 1965, when discussions on the consideration of the Seventeenth Constitution Amendment Bill were completed, there was a Division. The Amendment failed to get majority support of the House and, therefore, the Motion to amend the Constitution could not be carried. The Government demanded a fresh Division. But, Speaker Hukam Singh rejected the demand and observed that he could not interfere in the Division and that had to be accepted by the House.

During his Speakership, for the first time in the history of the Lok Sabha, a Motion of No-Confidence against the Council of Ministers was admitted and discussed in August 1963. During his term as Speaker, as many as six Motions of No-Confidence against various Councils of Ministers were admitted and discussed. Through all these stormy debates, Hukam Singh ensured that decorum and discipline were maintained in the House.

Hukam Singh presided over debates on many important subjects. The Defence of India Act was one of the major legislations passed by the House in the wake of the Chinese aggression on India. The remarkable way he conducted the proceedings of the House when such a sensitive issue was being discussed profoundly elevated his position as Speaker.

Hukam Singh was also the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the two Houses which had been formed in October 1965 to find out a solution based on goodwill and reasonable approach to the issue of the *Punjabi Suba*.

As Speaker, Hukam Singh led the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences in Lagos (Nigeria) in October-November 1962 and in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) in November 1963. He also led Indian Parliamentary Delegations on goodwill visits to the USSR and Mongolia in September-October 1962, to U.K. and West Germany in October 1964 and to the Philippines in May 1965. At the invitation of the Government of the United States of America, Hukam Singh also led a Parliamentary Delegation to USA in June 1963.

Hukam Singh did not contest the General Elections in 1967 and laid down the office of the Speaker on 16 March 1967. Thereafter, he was appointed as Governor of Rajasthan on

15 April 1967 and stayed in office till June 1972. As Governor also, he won widespread acclamation for upholding the high tradition of the office.

As in politics, Hukam Singh was brilliant in many other fields also. During his college days, he was a recognised sportsman and was a member of the Panjab University Hockey team during 1914-16. He also took keen interest in education and was the Manager of the Khalsa High School, Montgomery in 1941 and again from 1943 to 1945. He was the Chairman of the Governing Body of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, Delhi. Besides, to his credit, he had a few books in English and Punjabi such as *Sikh Case*, *The Problems of Sikhs*, *Russia as I Saw It* and *Russia Today*. In 1967, he was awarded honorary degree of LL.D. by the Punjabi University, Patiala.

Hukam Singh passed away on 27 May 1983 at the age of 88.

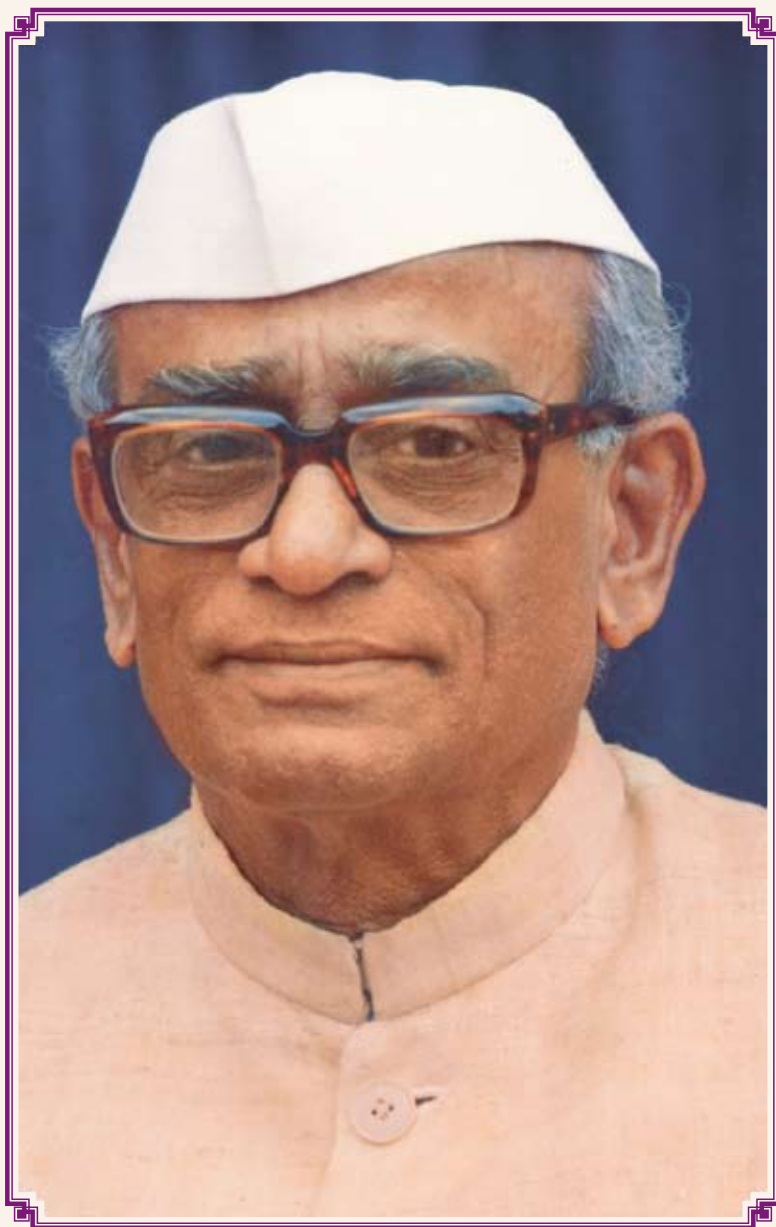
## 4

### N. SANJIVA REDDY

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It is often said that Presiding Officers should strive not only to be fair and impartial but should also appear to be so. This difficult task is further complicated since they are usually elected to the House on a political party's ticket. Some are of the view that Speakers should not remain party members once they are elected to office. Others feel that in our party system, it may be unfair to ask the Speaker to dissociate fully from the political party on whose ticket he had won the election. In our parliamentary history, Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy is the only Speaker since Independence who after assuming the office of Speaker formally resigned from his political party. He also had the distinction of being the only Speaker who was later unanimously elected as the President of the Republic. His distinguished public life was marked by high standards of performance in several capacities in which he served the country with deep commitment to parliamentary democracy and its essential norms.





**N. SANJIVA REDDY**  
(17 March 1967—19 July 1969  
and  
26 March 1977—13 July 1977)

**B**orn on 19 May 1913 in the Illur village of district Anantapur in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy belonged to an enlightened middle class family. He had his primary education at the reputed Theosophical High School, Adayar, Madras. The spiritual atmosphere of the school left a deep impact on the mind of young Reddy. Later, he joined the Government Arts College at Anantapur for his higher studies. However, destiny had something else in store for him.

Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Anantapur in July 1929 was the turning point in Reddy's life. Like many other young people of his generation, Reddy too came under the profound influence of Gandhiji's thoughts, words and actions. He discarded his foreign clothes and took to Khadi as his dress. He gave up his studies and threw himself into the freedom struggle. He never regretted the decision of leaving his college.

Reddy actively participated in various Youth Congress activities and in 1937, at a young age, he became the Secretary of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee (APCC). True to his character, Reddy managed the affairs of the APCC meticulously and methodically. It was a testimony to his qualities of leadership and his organising ability that he remained in that post continuously for a long span of ten years. During 1940-45, he underwent imprisonment several times for participating in the freedom movement.

Reddy's legislative career began in 1946 when he was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly and became the Secretary of the Madras Congress Legislature Party. The following year, he was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of India and actively participated in the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly which was shaping the destiny of the nation for the generations to come. In 1949, he was back in the State politics and from April 1949 till April 1951, he served as the Minister for Prohibition, Housing and Forests in the then Madras State.

In 1951, Reddy was elected the President of the APCC where he served for a year before returning to the Centre as a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1952. However, he remained a member of

the Upper House only for a short while. In 1952, in recognition of his political sagacity, drive and dynamism, he was appointed the Deputy Chief Minister of the new-born State of Andhra and played a very important role in the formation of the Andhra State. Subsequently, following the reorganisation of the States in October 1956, the State of Andhra Pradesh was constituted and the choice for the Chief Minister of the newly formed State fell on Reddy.

As Chief Minister, Reddy realised that democracy could function effectively only when the people at the grass-root level were politically educated, trained and equipped. He had a vision of an era of decentralised power and he always strove to strengthen democracy at the grass-root level. His creative leadership and progressive outlook, coupled with his pragmatic approach to the multifarious problems of the newly set up State, were widely appreciated.

Soon, Reddy began to emerge as a political leader of national stature. In 1959, he resigned as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh to take up the post of the President of the Congress Party. To Reddy, power was never an end in itself but only a means to an end, that being the welfare of the people.

After serving for two terms as the President of the Congress Party, Reddy went back to Andhra Pradesh for a second term as the Chief Minister. In February 1964, when the Supreme Court made certain observations in the Bus Routes Nationalisation case against the Government of Andhra Pradesh for not filing an affidavit, he voluntarily tendered his resignation from the office of the Chief Minister, thus setting an example of high standards in public life.

On 9 June 1964, Reddy joined Lal Bahadur Shastri's Government as the Minister of Steel and Mines. In the same year, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha. He also served for a very brief period as the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism in Indira Gandhi's Government in 1967.

Reddy was elected to the Fourth Lok Sabha from the Hindupur constituency in Andhra Pradesh. On 17 March 1967, Reddy was elected the Speaker of the Fourth Lok Sabha, amidst widespread acclaim and admiration. He was very particular about maintaining the independence and impartiality of the august office as he considered them to be indispensable for the successful working

of parliamentary democracy. Immediately after his election as the Speaker, he resigned from his 34-year-old membership of the Congress Party, thus becoming the first Speaker since Independence to have formally severed his party affiliation. He believed that the Speaker belongs to the whole House, he represents the totality of members and as such he should belong to no party or rather he should belong to all parties.

Though Reddy remained the Speaker only for a little over two years, he lent dignity and distinction to the office by the exemplary manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the House. He possessed a large measure of personal authority, a willingness to appreciate the others' point of view and a deep understanding of the sense of the House which enabled him to conduct the parliamentary business in an orderly and effective manner. With his vast experience of men and matters, Reddy tactfully handled delicate situations within the House by his commendable patience and common sense. He conducted the proceedings of the House with such dexterity that there was not even a single occasion when the Opposition resorted to staging a walkout from the House. Also, no member was named when Reddy was in the Chair.

During Reddy's Speakership, many significant rulings were given and conventions laid down which have enriched the parliamentary traditions and practices. Reddy, for the first time, allowed a No-Confidence Motion to be taken up for discussion on the same day when the President addressed both the Houses. He believed that urgent matters should not be delayed by taking recourse to traditions and precedents.

Reddy was always conscious of affording equal opportunity to each and every member of the House to express his or her views. He defended, with utmost concern, the rights and privileges of the members both inside and outside the House. It was during his tenure as Speaker that for the first time in the history of the Lok Sabha, the House sentenced a person to imprisonment for committing contempt of the House by shouting slogans and throwing pamphlets on the floor of the House from the Visitors' Gallery.

The setting up of the Committee on the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was another significant innovation during Reddy's Speakership. Inaugurating the first sitting of the Committee on 18 December 1968, he hoped that the Committee would ensure that the measures taken by the Union Government for the advancement of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were effectively implemented.

On 19 July 1969, Reddy resigned the Speakership of the Lok Sabha to contest the Presidential election which he lost by a narrow margin. After a period of voluntary exile from politics, Reddy was back in the Sixth Lok Sabha. On 26 March 1977, he was unanimously elected the Speaker of the Sixth Lok Sabha. However, this time too, he could not complete his full term as the Speaker and after serving for four months, he again resigned from the high office to file nomination papers for the Presidentship of India.

Reddy achieved the pinnacle of glory when he was elected the President of India on 25 July 1977. During his tenure as President, he took various historic decisions on crucial issues.

By his long years in public life and by virtue of his close association with leaders of all sections of opinion in the country, President Reddy could steer the destiny of the nation at a critical stage in its history. His sagacious leadership, affability and accessibility endeared him to people belonging to all walks of life. He also lent a rare distinction to the highest office in the land by his pragmatism, idealism and patriotism. As a world statesman, Reddy articulated the nation's views with utmost finesse in the international fora.

Following the completion of his term, Reddy retired to private life in his home town, Anantapur.

Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy passed away at his native place in June 1996 at the age of 83.

## 5

### G.S. DHILLON

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Dr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon was a multifaceted personality with interests that ranged from law to journalism and from education and sports to constitutional studies. A man of uncompromising principles, he considered the institution of Parliament to be the temple of democracy and as such had great respect for the House and its traditions and conventions. The rare ability to quickly assess the mood of the House and a pragmatic approach helped him discharge the onerous responsibility of the office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha in a dignified way. Dhillon's election as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council of the IPU was at once a great honour for himself and also for the people and the Parliament of India.



**G.S. DHILLON**  
(8 August 1969—19 March 1971  
and  
22 March 1971—1 December 1975)

Gurdial Singh Dhillon was born at Panjwar in Amritsar district in Punjab on 6 August 1915. A brilliant student, he was educated at Kh. College, Amritsar, Government College, Lahore and the University Law College, Lahore.

During the period 1937-45, Dhillon practised Law and established himself as a successful lawyer. However, the lucrative legal profession could not circumscribe his sense of patriotism and concern for his fellow beings. Soon, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the freedom struggle and the Kisan Movement for which he had to face the wrath of the British rulers. He was jailed twice for his activities related to freedom struggle. The prolonged incarceration also forced him to abandon his legal profession.

After Independence, Dhillon took to journalism and established himself as a fearless and forceful writer. His writings carried a stamp of conviction that impressed the readers. His efforts to promote communal harmony in the face of the wanton acts of the communal forces were exemplary. With a view to forging consensus on crucial issues and educating the people on the nefarious designs of divisive forces, he even started and edited a Punjabi daily *Vartman* in 1947. Later, he became the Chief Editor of the Urdu daily *Sher-e-Bharat* and the Managing Director of the National Sikh Newspapers Ltd. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Journalists' Association of Punjab till 1952 and also a member of the State Press Advisory Committee till 1953.

Dhillon was actively involved in various social, economic and political activities. He was a member of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and the Amritsar District Board from 1946 to 1954 and Chairman of the Taran Taran Market Committee during 1948-52. A committed worker of the Congress Party, he was the Chairman of the Punjab Congress Disciplinary Action Committee during 1950-51 and President of the Amritsar District Congress Committee till 1953. For some years, he was a member of the All India Congress Committee also.

Dhillon had a long and distinguished career as a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1967. During this period, he shouldered various legislative responsibilities with



distinction. At various points of time, he was the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and the Committee of Privileges of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He also held the position of the Chairman of the Non-agriculturist Land Taxation Committee in the State. Dhillon was elected the Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1952 and remained in office till 1954. Later, he had a long tenure as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 1954 to 1962. As Speaker, he conducted the proceedings of the House in a manner that earned him the respect of all sections of the Assembly.

Dhillon was the General Secretary of the Punjab Congress Legislature Party and its Chief Whip from 1964 to 1966. During 1965-66, he worked as Minister of Transport, Rural Electrification, Parliamentary Affairs and Elections and also for Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the 1965 war-hit areas in Punjab. A nationalist out and out, Dhillon fearlessly moved around in the border areas during the 1965 war and inspired people to face the danger from across the borders unitedly. His courage and organising ability brought him encomiums from far and wide.

Dhillon was elected to the Fourth Lok Sabha in 1967 on the Congress ticket from the Taran Taran parliamentary constituency in Punjab. Thereafter, he was appointed Chairman of the Select Committee on the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1967. Later, he was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Public Undertakings for two terms, for 1968-69 and 1969-70. He was also a member of the Panel of Chairmen.

Following the resignation of the then Speaker Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy to contest the presidential election, Dhillon was unanimously elected as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha on 8 August 1969. When elected to the Chair, Dhillon had the distinction of being the youngest Speaker of the Lok Sabha till then. The way he conducted the proceedings impressed members belonging to all political parties represented in the House.

After he was returned to the Lok Sabha in 1971, again from the Taran Taran constituency, Dhillon was re-elected as the Speaker on 22 March 1971. His re-election was a testimony to his popularity as well as his ability.

Deeply imbued with democratic values, Dhillon believed that the end purpose of freedom itself and democratic existence was the emancipation and betterment of the life of the common man so as to build the foundation for an enduring social order. He had the highest respect for parliamentary institutions and always strived to maintain the dignity of the House. Dhillon believed that in order to conduct the proceedings of the House, it was necessary that all sections of the House worked with a disciplined mind and showed respect not only to the rules and regulations but also to customs and conventions. With a view to maintaining the dignity of the House, he expected the members to show tolerance and listen to with patience what others, including their opponents, had to say and meet or counter the points made by them through arguments in a logical and controlled manner.

Dhillon was firm in upholding the rules of the House. In 1970, some members objected to papers included in the List of Business in the name of a Cabinet Minister being laid on the Table by a Deputy Minister belonging to a different Ministry. Dhillon, thereupon, observed that the concerned Minister, or in his absence the Minister of State or the Deputy Minister should lay the paper on the Table. In case they were not present, he would not allow any other Minister to lay the paper on the Table of the House, unless he was duly informed about it.

Dhillon was of the firm view that the Executive should not try to enter into the area which rightfully belonged to the Legislature. Fully conscious that the law-making power remained in the domain of the Legislature, Dhillon once reiterated his predecessors' view that the Government should ensure that Ordinances were issued only if there was real emergency or urgency justifying such an action.

On another occasion, reacting to the Government's announcement in March 1970 to hike the prices of some commodities without informing the House when the Parliament was in Session, Dhillon observed that it was improper to announce such decisions without informing the House when it was sitting.

Dhillon resigned from the office of the Speaker on 1 December 1975 and was sworn in the same day as the Minister of Shipping and Transport in the Union Cabinet. He continued in

this post till 1977. He was a member of the Planning Commission in 1980. He served as the Indian High Commissioner in Canada during 1980-82. As High Commissioner, he proved himself to be a seasoned diplomat and contributed significantly to the strengthening of Indo-Canadian relations.

Dhillon was elected to the Eighth Lok Sabha, this time from the Ferozepur constituency, in September 1985. He was soon inducted into the Union Council of Ministers as Minister of Agriculture and held this charge from 12 May 1986 to 14 February 1988. As Union Minister, Dhillon discharged his functions with great distinction.

Dhillon was closely associated for many years with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He had led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 15th, 17th, 18th and 19th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences held in Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) in October 1969, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) in September 1971, Blantyre (Malawi) in October 1972 and in London (United Kingdom) in September 1973. He served as the Regional Representative for Asia on the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and was elected its President in Colombo in 1974. He presided over the 21st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in New Delhi in October-November 1975.

Dhillon also attended the First Commonwealth Speakers' and Presiding Officers' Conference held in Ottawa (Canada) in September 1969. He had the distinction of conducting and presiding over the Second Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers held in India in 1970-71. Besides, he attended many Meetings of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Meetings of the Standing Committee of the Commonwealth Speakers' and Presiding Officers' Conference. He was the Chairman of the Standing Committee during 1971-74.

Dhillon presided over the 57th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in New Delhi in October-November 1969. This was the first time that the Conference was held in India. Dhillon conducted

the proceedings of the Conference in a very dignified manner. He remained on the Executive Committee of the Union for several years.

Dhillon was elected the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 113th Session held in Geneva in October 1973. He was the first Asian to hold this prestigious position. This was a recognition of his personal qualities and of his hard and conscientious work for the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Dhillon made immense contribution to the goals of promoting personal contacts among members of all Parliaments and uniting them in common action to secure and maintain the full participation of their respective countries in the firm establishment and development of representative institutions and in the advancement of the work of international peace and cooperation.

He was re-elected as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council in Tokyo in October 1974 and occupied that post till 1976. As the President of the Council, Dhillon presided over various meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

As the Leader of Indian Parliamentary Delegations to foreign countries, Dhillon brought great prestige and dignity to the Indian Parliament. He also had the honour of leading Indian Delegations to the 41st and 42nd Sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in 1985 and 1986.

Dhillon was actively associated in promoting many social, cultural and educational organisations and academic bodies. He was an elected member of the Syndicate and the Senate of the Panjab University, Chandigarh from 1956 onwards, of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, during 1971-78 and again during 1985-86 and of the Punjabi University, Patiala during 1968-69. He had also the honour of holding the position of the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Panjab University, Chandigarh during 1974-81 and 1984-86. Besides, Dhillon served on the Board of Governors, Yadavendra Public School, Patiala and the Public School, Nabha for some years. He was also associated with the functioning of several other educational institutions.

A many-splendoured personality, Dhillon was involved in various social activities. He was a member of the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust, Amritsar. An erudite scholar, he was the

co-editor of *Chatrik Abhinandan Granth*. He wrote several pamphlets, brochures and articles on subjects of topical concern. He was also a progressive farmer, a sportsman and a patron of civil aviation and gliding. A veteran freedom fighter, he was awarded the *Tamra Patra* in recognition of his services to the nation.

Dhillon was conferred LL.D. by the Panjab University in 1969, the Punjabi University in 1971 and the Kurukshetra University in 1973. He was awarded D. Litt. by the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in 1971, Doctor of Political Science by the Humbolt University, Germany in 1973 and Ph.D. by the Sung Kuyun Kwan University (Republic of Korea) in 1973. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the promotion of the ideals of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Dhillon was honoured posthumously by an IPU Award at the inaugural function of the 89th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in New Delhi in 1993.

Dr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon passed away on 23 March 1992.

## 6

### BALI RAM BHAGAT

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A veteran freedom fighter with rich parliamentary experience and commendable knowledge of Legislative procedures and practices, Shri Bali Ram Bhagat was elected the Speaker of the Fifth Lok Sabha in January 1976. Bhagat possessed all the qualities for the job—he was straightforward and upright, firm and fair-minded; he also had a deep veneration for the House and its traditions. Bhagat had the shortest tenure as Speaker since Independence—less than fourteen months—but within this brief period, he left his indelible impress on the proceedings of the House. His subsequent career as Governor testified to his inherent talents and abilities and his capabilities had been in evidence in various forums, national as well as international.



**BALI RAM BHAGAT**  
(5 January 1976—25 March 1977)

**A**n agriculturist and political and social worker by profession, Bali Ram Bhagat was born on 7 October 1922 in Patna. He did his graduation from Patna College and later obtained a Masters Degree in Economics from Patna University.

Bhagat's passion for politics and his intense patriotism led him to plunge into the freedom struggle during his student days. In 1939, at the age of seventeen, he joined the Indian National Congress and took part in many struggles for the liberation of the country from the foreign rule. In 1942, he left the college to join the 'Quit India Movement' and remained underground for a period of two years. He was a founder member of the All India Students Congress in 1944 and was the General Secretary of the Bihar Pradesh Students' Congress during 1946-47.

Bhagat's association with national politics began in 1950 when he was elected to the Provisional Parliament. His keen interest in politics placed him in a position from where he could serve his motherland with selflessness and unflagging zeal. During these two years, he actively participated in various discussions in the House and established himself as an able parliamentarian.

From the Provisional Parliament to the First Lok Sabha and then on to the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Lok Sabhas, the parliamentary career of Bhagat was long and uninterrupted. During this period, he held a range of Ministerial portfolios. He was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance from 1952 to 1956. In 1956, he became the Deputy Minister of Finance and continued in that position for a period of seven years; as such, he had the distinction of holding the same portfolio during three consecutive Lok Sabhas.

In 1963, Bhagat became the Minister of State for Planning and held that post till January 1966. During 1963-1967, he was the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance. He also served as Minister in the Ministry of Defence for a short while in 1967 before he became the Minister of State for External Affairs the same year. He was elevated to the Cabinet rank in 1969 as the Minister of Foreign Trade and Supply. Later, he served as the Minister of Steel and Heavy Engineering for a period of eight months.



Whichever portfolio he held, Bhagat left a deep imprint by introducing new initiatives. As the Minister of Foreign Trade and Supply, he was responsible for building new institutions to encourage non-traditional exports such as leather, gem and jewellery, etc. Similarly, he encouraged the steel industry in new areas in South India during his tenure as the Minister of Steel and Heavy Engineering.

An able parliamentarian and a forceful speaker, Bhagat made rich contribution to the proceedings of the House. As Minister, he always came to the House fully prepared for the Question Hour and debates and discussions involving his Ministries. His parliamentary skill and eloquence, coupled with a constructive approach to the problems facing the country, earned him respect from various quarters. Even the members of the Opposition admired him for his deep understanding of the functioning of the Ministries he handled from time to time.

It was with this background that Bhagat was elected Speaker of the Fifth Lok Sabha on 5 January 1976 against the vacancy caused by the resignation of Speaker Dr. G.S. Dhillon. A veteran parliamentarian with vast and varied administrative experience, Bhagat reminded the members that as the supreme institution of the people, Parliament must ever be primarily concerned with popular will and aspirations. Parliamentary debates, he stressed, should always be geared to the fulfillment of this lofty goal. He assured the members that he was but a servant of the House and as such he equally belonged to all sections of the House.

As one who laid stress on discipline and decorum, Bhagat was a stickler for parliamentary traditions and convictions. His concern for procedural propriety is best illustrated by the ruling which he gave on a Calling Attention notice wherein he observed that the time taken on Calling Attention should be restricted to 30-35 minutes and the member Calling Attention should take only 3-4 minutes with the other members taking 2-3 minutes each. The Minister's reply should be complete but brief.

As Speaker, Bhagat upheld the basic norms of parliamentary conduct and was always calm and composed, even in trying situations. He was very particular about protecting the privileges of the members. During his Speakership, a question of privilege

regarding the handcuffing of a member of the Lok Sabha while he was being taken from the jail to the Magistrate's Court in Bihar came up before the House. Deploring the action of the officials concerned as highly improper, Speaker Bhagat observed that handcuffing of a Lok Sabha member was in utter disregard and defiance of the instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Government of Bihar. He expressed the hope that relevant instructions would be strictly and scrupulously followed in future.

A man of principles, Bhagat always believed in the Rule book. On a particular day, when the Question Hour was taken up, he was distraught to see that most of the members in whose names Questions stood in the list were not present in the House. As a result, the Question Hour collapsed after a short while. Expressing his grave concern over the development, Speaker Bhagat observed that this was an unfortunate situation which should not recur.

To strengthen the functioning of the Committee on Government Assurances and make it more effective, the First Conference of the Chairmen of the Committee on Government Assurances was held in March 1976 during Bhagat's Speakership. He emphasised that steps should be taken to ensure that the Government honoured and implemented the assurances given on the Floor of the House.

The Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training (BPST), an integral Division of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, set up with a view to ensuring smooth, efficient and prompt services to the legislative bodies both at the Centre and in the States, was inaugurated by Speaker Bhagat in 1976. The Bureau, he stressed, was designed to provide institutional opportunities for systematic training, orientation and problem and practice-oriented studies in the various disciplines of parliamentary institutions, processes and procedures to all those responsible for the running of the democratic system—legislators, policy makers, administrators and various other functionaries at different levels. Convinced of the immense significance of the various training programmes, Speaker Bhagat was confident that the Bureau would, in the course of time, grow into a prestigious centre of advanced study and research and training in the parliamentary field, with its link not only with the State Legislatures in India but also with similar institutions and Parliaments all over the world.

During his parliamentary career, Bhagat represented the Indian Parliament at various international fora. Beginning 1951, he attended the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Istanbul and later in 1981 in Havana. He also attended the 4th Commonwealth Speakers' and Presiding Officers' Conference held in London in September 1976. Besides, he attended the meetings of the Colombo Plan Conference in the years 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958 and 1964.

Bhagat had several Ministerial assignments on economic cooperation, trade and development. He was the Co-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Studies in Economic Development in India and Japan, a body set up in the wake of the meetings between Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his Japanese counterpart, Nobusuke Kishi. He held this position for about twelve years during 1963-75. This body, represented by leading economists, businessmen and administrators from both countries, played a leading role in the development of vital sectors of the Indian economy.

A firm believer in international economic cooperation, Bhagat was an active participant in the preparatory meetings of the Asian Development Bank in 1964 and 1965, culminating in the setting up of the Bank in Manila where he signed the Charter as the Special Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the President of India. He also had the privilege of attending the inaugural session of the Asian Development Bank as its Governor in Tokyo in 1966. He was the Alternate Governor to the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 1954 and again in 1958. Besides chairing the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1972, Bhagat was its member from 1972 to 1977. He was the Leader of the Indian Delegation to the Conference of UN Economic Commission for Asia and Far-East (ECAFE) held in Tokyo in 1955 and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held in Delhi in 1968. He also led the Indian Delegation to the UN General Assembly Session in 1968 and again in 1985.

Bhagat was the Deputy Leader of the Indian Delegation that attended the inaugural meetings of ECAFE and UNCTAD in Bangkok and in Geneva in 1956 and 1964, respectively, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit held in London in 1969 and in Nassau (The Bahamas) in 1985.

A human rights activist, Bhagat led the Indian Delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights which was held in Geneva in 1982-83. He also had the distinction of being the Chairman of the UN Seminar on the thirty-third anniversary of the Human Rights Commission in 1983. He laid special emphasis on the International Instruments of Economic Rights—notably the right to work—as a distinctive part of the Political and Civil Rights. Another distinctive feature of his contribution was regarding the rights of migrant labour, people of one country working in another country without equal rights. Bhagat stressed at various international conferences that migrant labour should enjoy the same civil and economic rights as the local citizens of a country. The Covenants on the Rights of Woman and the Child were also prepared during his association with the international human rights bodies.

Recognising Bhagat's active and significant role in building beneficial international economic cooperation in the Colombo Plan, ECAFE and Asian Development Bank and in promoting Indo-Japan cooperation, the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi once remarked that his talent had been substantial in realizing international economic cooperation.

Bhagat returned to the Seventh Lok Sabha in the General Elections held in 1980. During the Seventh Lok Sabha, Bhagat moved a resolution for negating the prison sentence passed on Smt. Indira Gandhi by the Sixth Lok Sabha. He emphasised the point that no Parliament anywhere had exercised such a right after 1782 when the British House of Commons ordered the expunction from the journals of one of its earlier resolutions expelling a member who was duly elected in 1764. The Lok Sabha adopted the resolution in what has been described as a major procedural development in our parliamentary history.

Bhagat was re-elected to the Eighth Lok Sabha as well. During this term, for a short spell, he was appointed Minister of External Affairs in Rajiv Gandhi's Government in 1985-86. He also held the post of the President of the Indian Council of World Affairs from 1982 to 1985.

Bhagat was appointed the Governor of Himachal Pradesh in February 1993, a position he held for four months. Later, he functioned as the Governor of Rajasthan from 30 June 1993 till

1 May 1998. His qualities of head and heart as also his long years in public life were major assets in his role as the Governor.

Bhagat was also a well known journalist and writer. During the 'Quit India Movement', he edited two underground weeklies—*Our Struggle* and *Non-Violent Revolution*. In 1947, he started *Rashtra Doot*, a progressive Hindi weekly from Patna. Besides being a regular contributor on economic, national and international affairs in leading national newspapers, Bhagat authored two books on international issues: *Non-Alignment—Present and Future* and *Commonwealth Today*.

Bhagat was always committed to the progress of the rural areas and the weaker sections. He had been an active social worker who never missed any opportunity to struggle for the socio-economic uplift of the landless labour and other disadvantaged sections of society. He articulated the voice of the underprivileged class through his writings in the columns of various journals and dailies.

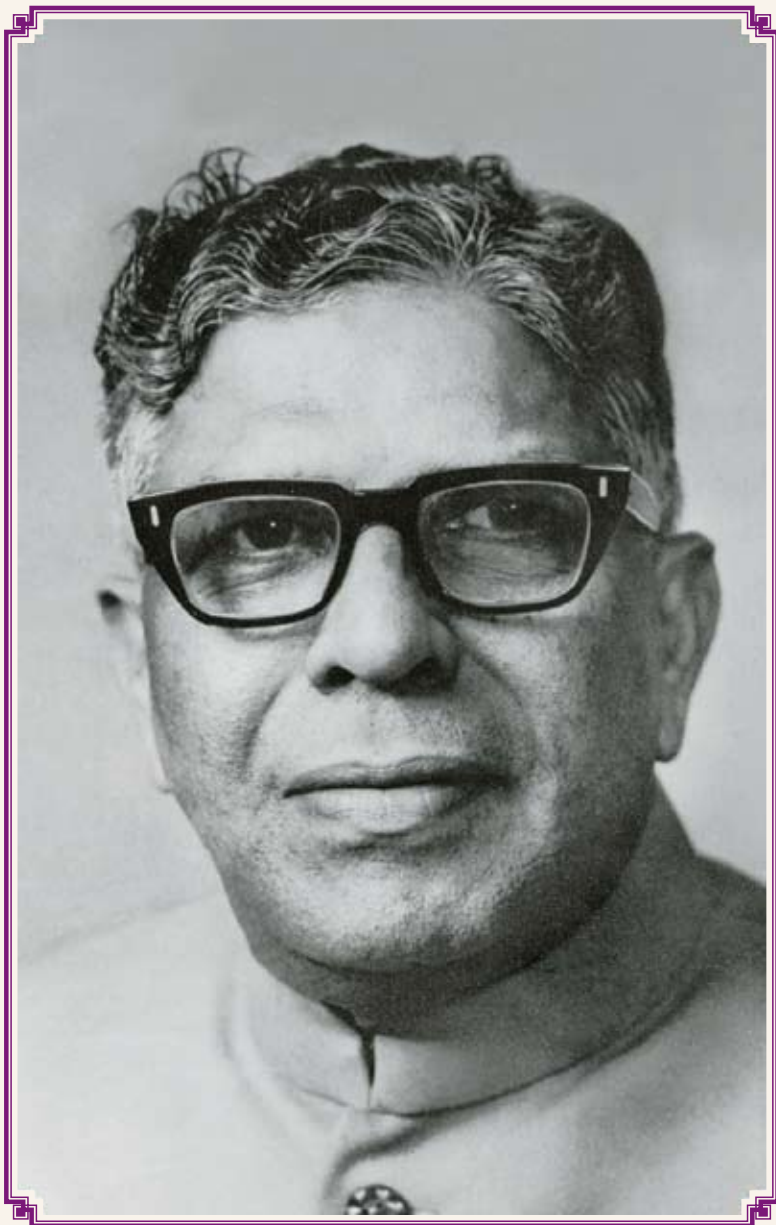
Bali Ram Bhagat passed away on 2 January 2011, at the age of 89.

# 7

## K.S. HEGDE

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The election of Shri K.S. Hegde as the Speaker of the Sixth Lok Sabha was unprecedented in the sense that he was chosen to occupy the high office in his very first term as a member of the Lok Sabha. His professional career is also unique since he was a member of the Rajya Sabha before he entered the Judiciary. His eminent judicial background, coupled with legislative experience, enabled him to ensure smooth conduct of the proceedings of the House in a manner that won him encomiums from all sections of the Lok Sabha. True to his conviction, he preserved and sustained the authority of the Chair all through his tenure.



**K.S. HEGDE**  
(21 July 1977—21 January 1980)

**K**awdoor Sadananda Hegde was born on 11 June 1909 at village Kawdoor of Karkala Taluk in South Kanara district of the erstwhile State of Mysore. He was educated at the Kawdoor Elementary School and the Karkala Board High School. Subsequently, he was an alumnus of the St. Alosius College, Managalore, the Presidency College, Madras and the Law College, Madras.

Primarily an agriculturist, Hegde also possessed a rich and varied judicial experience. He began his legal profession in 1933 and worked as Government Pleader and Public Prosecutor during the period 1947-51. He was a champion of the farming community and he always tried to promote their cause. Hegde was elected to the Rajya Sabha as a Congress Party nominee in 1952. Hegde served the Upper House till 1957 and made outstanding contributions to its deliberations. He was a member of the Panel of Chairmen and also a member of the Public Accounts Committee and of the Rules Committee.

During this period, in 1954, Hegde was chosen as an alternate delegate to the Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly and served on its Second Committee with distinction. He was also a member of the Railway Corruption Enquiry Committee and of the Governing Body of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

In 1957, Hegde resigned from the Rajya Sabha when he was appointed a Judge of the Mysore High Court. As a Judge, he earned widespread respect and approbation for his judicial pronouncements. He served on the bench of the Mysore High Court till 1966, when he was appointed as the first Chief Justice of the Delhi and Himachal Pradesh High Court. Hegde had already distinguished himself as a Judge and as the Chief Justice of the High Court, he delivered many a judgment which were really path-breaking. In 1967, he was appointed by the President of India as a Judge of the Supreme Court in which capacity, he delivered many judgments of far-reaching significance.

He was known for his uprightness and authority and as a learned Judge who always gave precedence to the rule of law than anything else. As far as the independence of the Judiciary was concerned,



he was uncompromising and critical of interference, whatsoever, on the part of the Executive in the affairs of the Judiciary. A man of matchless honesty and utmost integrity, Hegde was convinced that a just social order could not be built up by any society if it was corrupt. And no amount of sacrifice could build a Welfare State unless there was an efficient and honest administration.

On 30 April 1973, Hegde tendered his resignation, as a matter of principle, when one of his junior colleagues was appointed as the Chief Justice of India.

Thereafter, Hegde once again started taking an active part in socio-political movements. In 1977, he was elected to the Sixth Lok Sabha from the Bangalore South constituency on a Janata Party ticket. He was appointed by the then Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy as the Chairman of the Committee of Privileges, a post he occupied till 20 July 1977.

On 21 July 1977, Hegde was elected to the office of the Speaker following the resignation of Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy to contest the election to the office of the President of India. There was only one motion before the Lok Sabha proposing Hegde's name for the office of the Speaker which was carried unanimously. The fact that Hegde was elected as Speaker even though he was a first timer in the House spoke of his stature, ability and acceptability to all sections of the House.

Speaker Hegde believed in the rule of law and fair play. Maintaining the supremacy of Parliament was uppermost in his mind. It was his constant endeavour to give opportunities to all members to participate in the proceedings of the House to the extent possible. He was convinced that the effectiveness of the House could be improved only when members maintained decorum and discipline and observed the rules scrupulously. He once ruled that when a member persisted in speaking in spite of the Speaker asking him not to speak, the Speaker, under his inherent powers, could direct that the relevant proceedings be not recorded.

Hegde strongly felt the need for a continuous review of procedures and practices so that they were in tune with the emerging needs. However, he was equally convinced that the modifications

should be such that they helped in making the best utilisation of the parliamentary floor time in the interest of the nation.

Speaker Hegde was for devising appropriate institutional arrangements within the Legislatures to facilitate realisation of parliamentary aspirations of members. He also believed that in admission of notices, in giving consent to proposals for discussion and in various other situations, the Speaker should show enlightened accommodation, keeping in mind the basic criteria of the larger public interest.

Hegde had given many important rulings as Speaker. In response to an unstarred question on 25 July 1977, the Minister concerned stated that he would be placing the relevant document in the Parliament Library for consultation by members. The matter was subsequently raised by a member under rule 377 on 1 August 1977. Speaker Hegde thereupon observed that whenever any document was to be placed for the benefit of the members, it should be laid on the Table of the House and not merely placed in the Parliament Library.

Hegde was keen to improve the effectiveness of the members so that they could adequately perform the multifarious roles required of them. He was for rendering effective research and reference assistance to the members, particularly new members, so that they might frame their questions and motions appropriately and also could get factual information and data for making their participation effective. Keeping this objective in mind, Speaker Hegde addressed a letter personally to the members of the Lok Sabha inviting them to make use of the Library, Reference, Research, Documentation and Information Services.

Hegde firmly believed in international peace and cooperation. He, therefore, accorded a great deal of importance to inter-parliamentary cooperation. He led the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 23rd, 24th and 25th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences held in Ottawa (Canada) in September 1977, in Kingston (Jamaica) in September 1978 and

in Wellington (New Zealand) in November-December 1979, respectively. Hegde also led the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 65th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Bonn (former Federal Republic of Germany) in September 1978 and the 66th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Caracas (Venezuela) in September 1979. Besides, he participated in the Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association on 'The CPA and the Future' held in London in January 1978 and the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers at Nassau (The Bahamas), also in January 1978.

Speaker Hegde attended the 5th Conference of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers held in Canberra (Australia) in August-September 1978 and the Meetings of the Executive Committee of the CPA held in Perth (Australia) in May 1979 as regional representative for Asia. Hegde also led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to Romania, Bulgaria and Poland in June 1979 and to the former Soviet Union in June-July 1979.

A voracious reader, Hegde had to his credit some acclaimed publications like *Crisis in the Judiciary* and *Directive Principles*.

During the short period that he remained the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, K.S. Hegde made a distinctive contribution not only in upholding the high office of the Speaker but also in consolidating parliamentary institutions in the country.

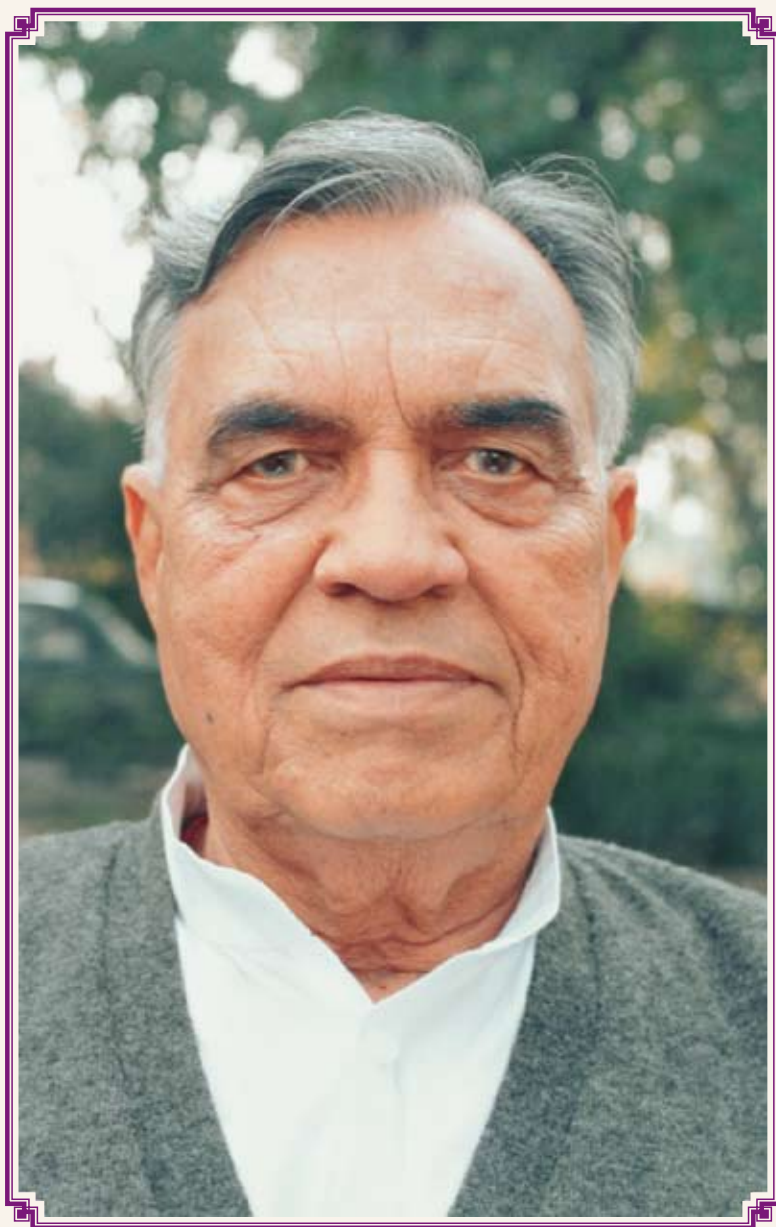
Hegde passed away on 24 May 1990 at his native place in Karnataka at the age of 81.

## 8

### BAL RAM JAKHAR

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Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar has the distinction of beginning his career in Parliament by occupying the office of the Speaker immediately after his election to the Seventh Lok Sabha for the first time. He also has the rare honour of having been chosen unanimously to preside over two successive Lok Sabhas for their full terms. A farmer-turned politician, Jakhar lived fully upto the challenges of the august office and conducted the business of the House with utmost dignity, decorum and objectivity. He relinquished the office of the Speaker in 1989, only to continue to play an active role in the Party he belongs to and through it in the country's socio-political life.



**BAL RAM JAKHAR**  
(22 January 1980—15 January 1985  
and  
16 January 1985—18 December 1989)

**B**al Ram Jakhar was born on 23 August 1923 at Panjkosi village in Ferozepur district of Punjab. He had a brilliant academic career and graduated in 1945 from the Forman Christian College, Lahore, with Honours in Sanskrit. He is virtually a linguist, being well-versed in English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. Jakhar is essentially an agriculturist, particularly an orchardist. After graduation, he adopted the family profession of farming and made use of modern techniques for the development of orchards and vineyards in his farmlands. Through years of hardwork, he succeeded in converting barren lands into green meadows and flourishing orchards and vineyards, raising the yields manifold.

Jakhar's services in the field of fruit-growing received national recognition when he was awarded the title 'All India Udyan Pandit' by the President of India in 1975. In the same year, he was also chosen to lead the Farmers' Delegation to the International Agricultural Producers' Conference in Washington. During this period, he was elected President of the Punjab Cooperative Grape Growers' Federation and as the President of the Farmers' Forum of the State. Recognising his contributions in the field of agriculture, he was awarded the honorary degrees of Doctor of Science and 'Vidya Martand', respectively, by the Haryana Agricultural University, Hissar, and the Gurukul Kangri Vishwa Vidyalaya, Hardwar. It was his leadership role among the farming community that eventually propelled Jakhar into an active political role at the national level.

Jakhar's legislative career began in 1972 when he was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Punjab. Within one year of his election to the Assembly, he was inducted into the Council of Ministers as the Deputy Minister of Co-operation, Irrigation and Power. He remained a Minister till 1977. On being re-elected to the Assembly in 1977, he was chosen as the Leader of the Congress (I) Legislature Party and in that capacity was recognised as the Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, a position he held till January 1980 when he was elected to the Seventh Lok Sabha from the Ferozepur parliamentary constituency. Through his active role in the affairs of Punjab as a political activist, legislator, Minister and as the Leader of the Opposition, Jakhar had already proved his mettle.

Jakhar was elected the Speaker of the Seventh Lok Sabha on 22 January 1980. Even though Jakhar did not have any previous experience as a Presiding Officer, he was completely unperturbed about the great responsibility cast upon him. With a realistic role-perception, with confidence in himself and with his innate common sense, Jakhar efficiently discharged his duties as the Presiding Officer of the House with great finesse and competence. He was aware that the Speaker played a crucial role in the smooth and effective functioning of the House, represented by members with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, regional and socio-political backgrounds.

Jakhar always strove to carry on the business of the House with utmost dignity, decorum and objectivity. Firm, but at the same time sensitive to the mood of the House, he laid stress on the cooperation of the members in the smooth and orderly conduct of the House and thereby in projecting a healthy image of the Parliament to the country and outside. Though he attached great importance to procedures, rules, conventions and customs, he did not let them blunt the opinion of the House. He subscribed to the general view that in a parliamentary democracy, the House is the ultimate master of its own procedures.

The manner in which Jakhar conducted the proceedings of the Seventh Lok Sabha earned appreciation from all quarters and endeared him to all sections of the House. Therefore, on his re-election to the Lok Sabha in the General Elections of December 1984, this time from the Sikar parliamentary constituency of Rajasthan, he was the natural choice to preside over the new House as well. On 16 January 1985, he was re-elected, once again unanimously, to be the Speaker of the Eighth Lok Sabha. When he relinquished the office at the end of the Eighth Lok Sabha in December 1989, Jakhar earned the distinction of being the only Speaker in independent India to have presided over two successive Lok Sabhas for their full terms, only about a month short of a full decade (*i.e.* from 22 January 1980 to 18 December 1989).

Jakhar's decade-long stint as the Speaker of the Seventh and the Eighth Lok Sabhas was remarkable in many ways. All along, he remained vigilant in protecting the rights and privileges of the

members individually and of the House collectively. He once ruled that any officer of the Government deposing before a Parliamentary Committee was protected by the privileges of the House. Similarly, though he respected the role of the Judiciary in a democracy, he held that each organ of the Government should act only within the realm allotted to each by the Constitution, each respecting the rights and privileges of the other. Accordingly, in November 1987, Jakhar ruled that courts cannot compel the Speakers to present themselves before the courts in defence of what is perceived as their omissions and commissions relating to the functioning of Parliament.

Speaker Jakhar was steadfast in defending all matters concerning the privileges of the House. He was equally resolute in defending the sanctity of constitutional offices and discouraged every attempt to drag such offices for discussion in Parliament.

Jakhar's tenure as Speaker also witnessed the evolution of several procedural innovations and initiatives. After 1952, for the first time, a comprehensive review of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha was undertaken in 1989, under Speaker Jakhar's initiative, and several changes were formalised and incorporated into the Rules in May 1989. It was also during his tenure that the Anti-Defection Law which provided for disqualification of members on grounds of defection was enacted by Parliament in 1985. The Members of Lok Sabha (Disqualification on Grounds of Defection) Rules, 1985 came into force with effect from 18 March 1986.

Jakhar's initiative in revamping the Committee System in the Indian Parliament is indeed noteworthy. The full-fledged Departmentally Related Standing Committee System, introduced during the life of the Tenth Lok Sabha, was only an offshoot of the original Subject Committee System introduced by Jakhar in August-September 1989, after years of deliberations during the life of the Seventh and the Eighth Lok Sabhas. Similarly, the beginnings for the computerisation and automation of the services to the members of Parliament were made during the Speakership of Jakhar. All along, he took keen interest in the expansion of the Parliament Library and its Research, Reference, Documentation and Information Services for the benefit of the members.



In the Lok Sabha, Jakhar, as Speaker, was the Chairman of the Rules Committee, Business Advisory Committee and the General Purposes Committee. He took keen interest in organising periodic Conferences of the Chairmen of various Committees common to the national Parliament and the State Legislatures in New Delhi. This facilitated the sharing of each others' experiences and thereby led to more effective and purposeful functioning of these Committees throughout the country.

Jakhar demonstrated a remarkable sense of history when he took the initiative for the setting up of a Parliamentary Museum and Archives (PMA) and the Hall of National Achievements during his Speakership. The interest he showed in recalling the great sacrifices and contributions made by the leaders of the Indian freedom movement only testified to this sense of history. The celebrations marking the birth centenaries of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dada Saheb Mavalankar merit mention here.

Another area that received special attention from Bal Ram Jakhar during his Speakership was in improving inter-parliamentary contacts and cooperation between the Parliament of India and other Parliaments as also with the international parliamentary associations. With these objectives in view, Jakhar facilitated the hosting of many Conferences of Parliamentarians at different levels. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Regional Seminar in 1981 and the Conference of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers in 1986 were held in New Delhi at his initiative. He was also very actively associated with the activities of the CPA and the IPU.

Jakhar was a member of the CPA Executive Committee for several years since 1980. He was the first Asian to have been elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of the CPA in 1984 for a three-year term. In these capacities, he chaired and attended several meetings of the CPA Executive Committee. He was also elected a member of the Executive Committee of the IPU in 1983.

After he relinquished the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Jakhar was appointed General-Secretary of the All India Congress Committee (I) in 1990. In the General Elections of 1991, Jakhar was once again elected to the Lok Sabha from the Sikar constituency and became Minister of Agriculture in the new Government.

As the Union Minister of Agriculture, during the 1991-1996 period, Jakhar's primary concern was protecting the interests of the Indian farmers who constitute nearly 80 per cent of the population. In Parliament and in the Government, he successfully projected and protected the interests of the farming community. He strongly resisted both national and international pressures for cutting down the subsidies to the farmers in the wake of the liberalisation of the economy initiated by the Government of which he was a part. He firmly believed that encouragement to industries should not be at the cost of the farmers of the country. As the Minister of Agriculture, he represented India at various International Conferences relating to fisheries and agriculture, besides leading several Ministerial Delegations to other countries. He was also a member of the Planning Commission from 1991 to 1996.

Jakhar did not contest the elections to the Eleventh Lok Sabha in 1996. However, he continued to be active in the affairs of the Congress Party and in national politics. Again, with the Eleventh Lok Sabha proving to be a short-lived one, Jakhar soon had the opportunity to contest yet another election to the Lok Sabha successfully from the Bikaner parliamentary constituency in Rajasthan in February 1998 and remained a member of Parliament till the dissolution of the Twelfth Lok Sabha on 26 April 1999. During this term in Parliament, Jakhar was a member of the Committee of Privileges, General Purposes Committee, and Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Agriculture. He was also Chairman of the Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Petroleum and Chemicals.

Bal Ram Jakhar was appointed Governor of Madhya Pradesh on 30 June 2004 and held that office till 29 June 2009. He also served as Governor of Gujarat (acting) from 2 to 23 July 2004.

Besides being a senior leader of the Congress Party, a seasoned politician and a distinguished parliamentarian, Jakhar has also been the Chairman of the Bharat Krishak Samaj and the Managing Committee of the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust. He is actively associated with numerous socio-cultural and literary organizations and was the Chairman of the Third World Hindi Conference,

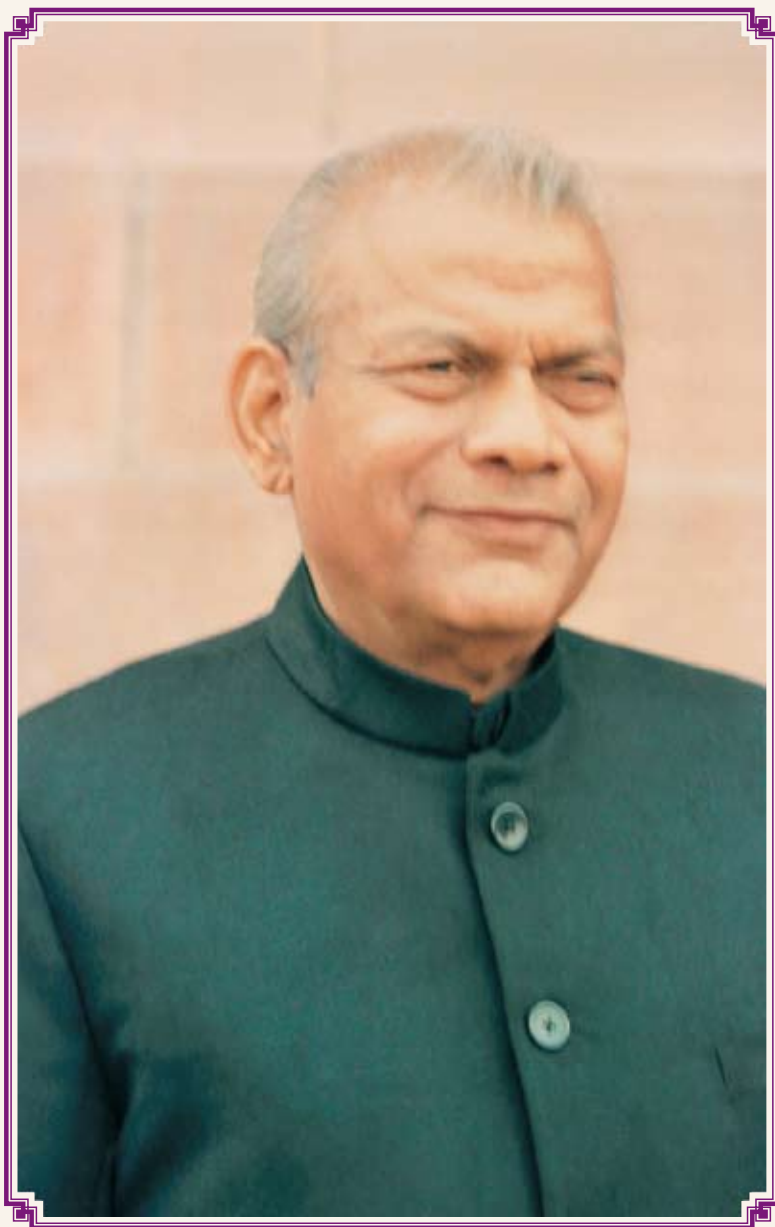
Delhi. It merits mentioning here that he did not let his busy public life inhibit his scholarly instincts; he has authored three books, namely, *People, Parliament and Administration*, an authentic work on contemporary Indian politics; *New Horizons in Agriculture in India*; and *Udgaar*, a compilation of his speeches as Governor of Madhya Pradesh. With his unceasing interest in agriculture, sports and literary activities, combined with his much demanding public work, Jakhar leads a hectic life.

# 9

## RABI RAY

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The elections to the Ninth Lok Sabha heralded a new era in Indian parliamentary democracy, with no single political party securing an absolute majority of its own in the House leading to a ‘hung Parliament’. In the midst of this unprecedented political uncertainty, members of the Lok Sabha, cutting across party lines, unanimously elected Shri Rabi Ray as the Speaker. Endowed with an inherent simplicity and transparent sincerity, Rabi Ray enriched and enhanced the prestige and dignity of the office of the Speaker by his impartial and judicious approach.



**RABI RAY**  
(19 December 1989—9 July 1991)

Rabi Ray was born on 26 November 1926 in Bhauragarh village in the Puri district of Orissa. He graduated in History from the premier College of the State, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and later studied Law in Madhusudan Law College, Cuttack. The foundation of his future political career was laid when he was elected President of the Ravenshaw College Students Union in 1948-49 and as the first President of the Madhusudan Law College Students Union in 1949-50.

Rabi Ray, like the rest of his countrymen, was deeply drawn towards the freedom struggle. An extreme sense of patriotism and abhorrence for foreign rule were ingrained in him since his student days. In early 1947, while doing his graduation, he courted arrest in connection with the unfurling of the National Flag. Though the country was still under foreign rule, the British Government ultimately had to yield to the students' demand for unfurling the Tricolor in educational institutions.

An ardent believer in socialism from his college days, Rabi Ray joined the Socialist Party as its member in 1948. Due to his innate qualities of leadership and his deep commitment to the socialist cause, he always remained in the forefront of the socialist movement. During 1953-54, he held the post of the Joint Secretary of the All India Samajwadi Yuvak Sabha. In 1956, under the leadership of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, he founded the Socialist Party in Orissa. He was also a member of the National Executive of the Socialist Party during that period. Later, in 1960, he became the General Secretary of the Party for about a year.

Rabi Ray's association with the Parliament began in 1967 when he was elected to the Fourth Lok Sabha from the Puri constituency in Orissa. He was the Leader of the Parliamentary Group of the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) during this period. In 1974, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Orissa and completed his full term of membership in the year 1980. Rabi Ray, known for his forthright views and for constructive opposition, was an articulate parliamentarian. His contribution to the parliamentary debates and indeed to the national life as a whole was as enormous as it was rich.

The General Elections to the Sixth Lok Sabha in 1977 resulted in a new political dispensation at the Centre. The Congress Party which had been dominating the national political horizon since Independence lost power at the Centre for the first time following which the Janata Party formed the Government. Impressed by Rabi Ray's selfless service, Prime Minister Morarji Desai inducted him into his Cabinet as Minister for Health and Family Welfare in January 1979 and he continued in that post till January 1980. During the period 1977-80, he was also the General Secretary of the Janata Party.

Rabi Ray returned to the Ninth Lok Sabha on the Janata Dal ticket from the Kendrapara constituency in Orissa in the General Elections held in 1989. On 19 December 1989, he was unanimously elected as the Speaker of the Ninth Lok Sabha. Fully conscious of the onerous responsibility of the high office, Rabi Ray assured members that so long as he was the Speaker, he would remain above party politics and would be fair to all.

Rabi Ray's tenure as Speaker lasted eighteen and a half months; there were many challenges that he faced in each Session which he tackled with a combination of finesse and firmness. During his Speakership, he initiated certain procedural innovations which have made the functioning of Parliament far more effective as an institution mirroring the urges and aspirations of the common people.

One of the most important and far-reaching decisions which Speaker Rabi Ray took related to the issue of disqualification of some of the members from the membership of the Lok Sabha following a split in the Janata Dal. On 6 November 1990, fifty-eight members claimed to have constituted a group representing the break-away faction of the Janata Dal and they adopted the name of Janata Dal (S). There were claims and counter-claims about the timing of the split *vis-a-vis* the timing of expulsion. Displaying a high sense of responsibility, he examined the pros and cons of the issue dispassionately before arriving at a decision. His impartiality was well served by his legal acumen; indeed, his was a precedent setting ruling.

Yet another important decision taken by Rabi Ray as Speaker was admitting the first ever notice of a motion for presenting an Address to the President of India for the removal from office of a Judge of the Supreme Court of India. He subsequently set up a Committee for the purpose of making an investigation into the grounds on which the removal of the Judge was prayed for. Since the motion has a life of its own under the law, it does not lapse with the dissolution of the House unlike other motions. The motion was finally decided by the Tenth Lok Sabha.

Speaker, Rabi Ray introduced certain changes in the practices and procedures of the House so as to provide more opportunities to the members for raising matters of urgent public importance. The 'Zero Hour', though not recognised in the Rules of Procedure, has always been used by members to raise issues and draw the attention of the House to matters of urgent public importance. Rabi Ray innovated an institutional arrangement to regulate the proceedings during the 'Zero Hour' for the better utilisation of the time of the House. After ascertaining the views of the Leaders of various parties and groups in the House, seven members were allowed to make brief submissions on matters of urgent public importance one by one provided they gave their notices by 10.30 A.M. on the day of the sitting. This arrangement was appreciated by all sections of the House, as it not only resulted in matters being raised in a more orderly manner and more optimal use of the time of the House, but also in very constructive results to the extent of forcing the Government to make firm commitments on issues agitating the House or large sections thereof.

The functioning of the Parliamentary Committees in the Indian Parliament had amply proved that they are a helpful adjunct to the political system. Keeping in mind the growing complexities of a modern Welfare State, a need was felt to have subject-based Committees broadly on the pattern obtaining in countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand to cover the entire spectrum of administration for an in-depth and continuous scrutiny of administrative performance. The Rules Committee of the Eighth Lok Sabha recommended the setting up of three Departmentally-related Subject Committees—one



each on Agriculture, Environment and Forests and Science and Technology — on an experimental basis. Speaker Rabi Ray hoped that the three new Committees would become the forerunners of a comprehensive system of subject-based Standing Committees thereby making parliamentary surveillance more of a living reality than hitherto. As Speaker, he served as Chairman of the Business Advisory Committee, Rules Committee and General Purposes Committee. Earlier, he was also a member of the Public Accounts Committee (1975) and the Joint Select Committee on Lokpal Bill, 1977-78.

Speaker Rabi Ray gave a new direction to the working of the Lok Sabha by allowing members ample opportunities to raise issues affecting the common people, like the availability of food through the public distribution system, drinking water facility, housing, health care, land for the tiller, agricultural inputs, employment, development of cottage and small industries, primary education, protection against exploitation and harassment of the poor and weaker sections. He also accorded priority to matters of national concern like communal riots, price rise, planning and development, strengthening of defence, etc. to enable the House to ventilate its genuine concern on these sensitive and crucial matters. He ably guided the deliberations of the House so that positive and constructive results flowed from the debates.

History was created during Speaker Rabi Ray's tenure when, for the first time, a Motion of Confidence moved by Prime Minister V.P. Singh was discussed and adopted on the same day. Eleven months later, history was again created when, for the first time, a Motion of Confidence was defeated resulting in the fall of the V.P. Singh Government.

The desirability as well as the extent of allowing T.V. cameras to enter the Chambers of Parliament had been under consideration for a long time, but a meaningful beginning was made during Rabi Ray's tenure when the Address by the President to the members of the two Houses assembled together in the Central Hall was telecast and broadcast live for the first time on 20 December 1989. The Address by the President to the Parliament was telecast and broadcast live in the subsequent year as well. Later, Rabi Ray constituted a Joint Sub-Committee of both the Houses to examine

the desirability, technical feasibility and cost involved in televising the proceedings of the two Houses as he strongly believed that this would bring Parliament closer to the people.

Rabi Ray was of the view that a Speaker not only acts as a guardian of the House but also has to ensure that the Parliament plays its due role in the promotion and strengthening of inter-parliamentary relations. He encouraged greater exchange of Parliamentary Delegations to promote bilateral relations in general and between fraternal Parliaments in particular, thereby giving a new direction to parliamentary diplomacy. He often stressed that parliamentary diplomacy facilitates airing viewpoints, defining problem areas, exchanging ideas and working cooperatively to find solutions to common concerns.

During his tenure, Speaker Rabi Ray led Parliamentary Delegations to different countries. He also led the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the 83rd and 84th Inter-Parliamentary Conferences held in Nicosia and Punta del Este in April 1990 and October 1990, respectively. Besides, Rabi Ray attended the 36th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Harare in September 1990. He also led the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the 10th Conference of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers in Harare in January 1990. Rabi Ray was elected the President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 1991.

Rabi Ray was ever keen that the generations to come should be made aware of the valuable contributions made by our national leaders. To recall, remember and place on record the services of eminent parliamentarians who played a notable role in the country's freedom struggle and contributed much to the development of the parliamentary system as well as to the building of modern India, the Indian Parliamentary Group, during his tenure, decided to celebrate the birth anniversaries of eminent parliamentarians by holding meetings/seminars/symposia, etc., and by bringing out Monographs under the "Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series". Resultantly, under this series, Monographs on Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Panampilli Govinda Menon, Bhupesh

Gupta, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, Jaisukh Lal Hathi, V.K. Krishna Menon, M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, S.M. Joshi, Dr. Lanka Sundaram, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur and Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava were brought out.

In 1991, Rabi Ray was re-elected to the Tenth Lok Sabha. Though Rabi Ray did not contest the elections after the Tenth Lok Sabha, he continues to be a political activist taking part in intellectual forums. He has spearheaded a people's movement through a non-political organisation, *Lok Shakti Abhiyan* against corruption in high places, excessive centralisation and a decadent consumerist culture since 1997. He has also toured different parts of the country in furtherance of ensuring probity and transparency in all spheres of our national life.

Rabi Ray was and still is actively associated with several official and non-official organisations in various capacities. He was Member, Central Silk Board, 1974 and the Chairman, Press Council during 1977-78. His association with social welfare organisations include his Presidentship of the Lohia Academy and the Gram Vikas Foundation.

Rabi Ray is essentially an activist in attitude and an idealist wedded to humanism. Socialism for him is not a mere intellectual conviction; he practises it in his real life too. He is firmly convinced that socialism is an effective instrument for improving the lot of the underprivileged. In his early years, he had taken part in several constructive activities like building of village roads by mobilising voluntary labour. He also organised study circles and youth clubs like the Samajwadi Nirman Kendra for facilitating the emergence of a strong, broad-based youth and peasant movement on socialist lines.

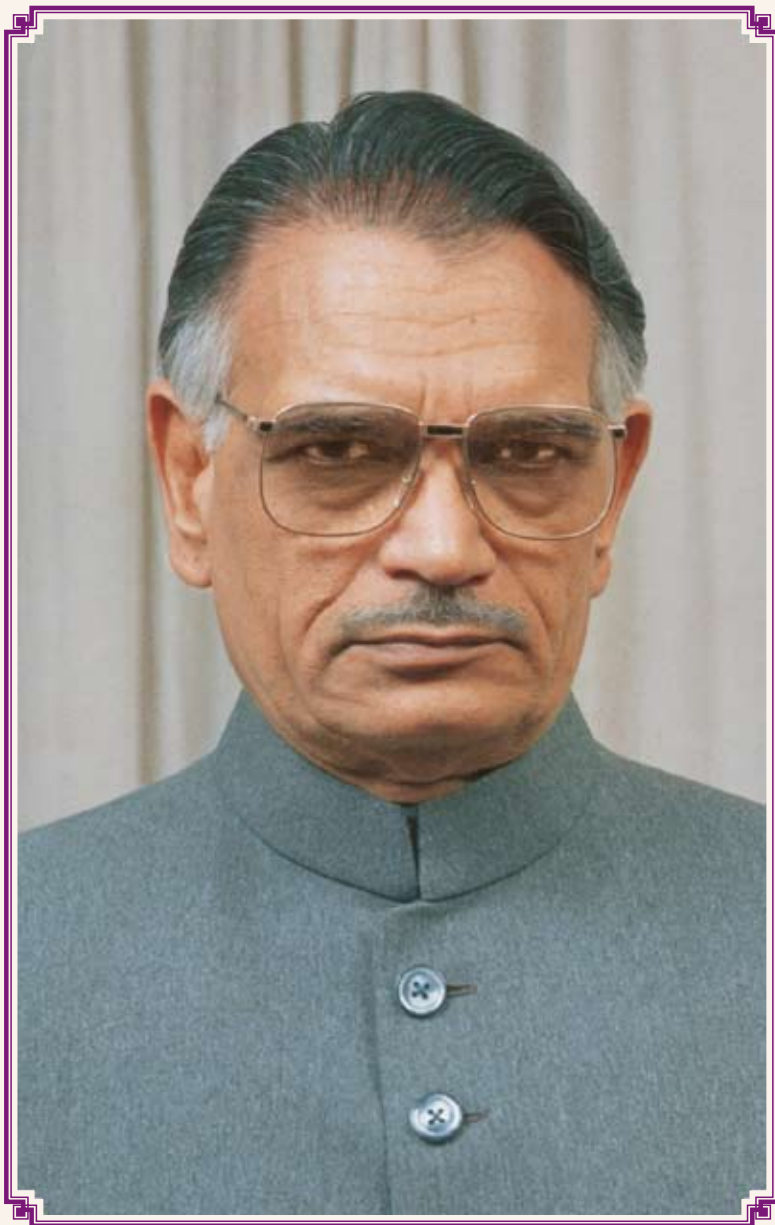
Besides his special interests, reading and social activities on Gandhian lines, Rabi Ray has many literary accomplishments to his credit. He has edited *Samata*, an Oriya monthly, and *Chaukhamba*, a Hindi weekly brought out by the erstwhile Socialist Party. His book on *Parliamentary Diplomacy* has been very well received. He has also contributed regularly articles on contemporary political and social issues to various leading journals in Oriya, Hindi and English.

# 10

## SHIVRAJ V. PATIL

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Shri Shivraj V. Patil has already had a long and distinguished parliamentary career when he was unanimously elected Speaker of the Tenth Lok Sabha. By his liberal approach, exemplary patience and an abiding sense of impartiality, he proved to be an excellent moderator in conducting the proceedings of the House. As the Presiding Officer, he delivered several rulings which will go down as landmarks in our parliamentary history, both for their content and significance.



**SHIVRAJ V. PATIL**  
(10 July 1991—22 May 1996)

**S**hivraj V. Patil was born on 12 October 1935 in Chakur village of Latur district in Maharashtra. He attended the Osmania University, Hyderabad, earning a graduation degree in Science before studying Law at the University of Bombay. After obtaining Master's degree in Law, Patil took up the job of a lecturer and taught for about six months, before he decided to practise law in his hometown, Latur. After a short while, public life beckoned him and in 1967, he was elected as the President of the Latur Municipality, a position that he held till 1969 and again from 1971 to 1972. As the President of Latur Municipality, Patil introduced many innovations in municipal administration, particularly relating to primary and secondary education, hospitals and underground drainage system, water supply scheme, town planning, etc.

Shivraj Patil's legislative career began in 1972 with his election to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. He remained a member of the State Legislative Assembly from 1972 to 1977 and again from 1977 to 1979. He was the Chairman, Committee on Public Undertakings, during 1974-75. Patil became Deputy Minister holding the portfolios of Law and Judiciary, Irrigation and Protocol in 1975 and continued in office till 1976. He was elected Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on 5 July 1977 and held the position till 13 March 1978. His uprightness, impartial handling of contentious issues and immense patience were greatly appreciated and on 17 March 1978, he was unanimously elected Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, an office he held till 6 December 1979.

Patil was elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time in 1980 from the Latur parliamentary constituency as a candidate of the Indian National Congress (I). He was re-elected to the Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Lok Sabhas in 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999, respectively, from the same constituency. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in July 2004.

Patil was a member of the Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament from 12 May 1980 to September 1980 and Chairman of the Committee from September 1980 to 18 October 1980.

During the next decade, he held important positions in the Union Council of Ministers. Patil was made a Minister of State in the Council of Ministers on 19 October 1980 and held the following portfolios: Defence-19 October 1980 to 14 January 1982; Commerce (Independent Charge)-15 January 1982 to 29 January 1983; Science and Technology, Atomic Energy, Electronics, Space and Ocean Development, Bio-Technology-29 January 1983 to 21 October 1986; Defence Production and Supplies-22 October 1986 to 24 June 1988; and Civil Aviation and Tourism (Independent Charge)-25 June 1988 to 2 December 1989.

In all the portfolios he held, Patil brought to bear his distinctive stamp. As the Minister of State for Defence, Patil quickly came to grasp the complex issues relating to the defence of the country through his extensive as well as intensive study. He emphasized the importance of investments in new technologies and modern equipment and better facilities for the defence forces. During his tenure as Defence Minister, he left no stone unturned to strengthen national defence by making optimal use of available funds. As Minister of Commerce, he not only stressed the exploration of new markets and new products for exports and simplification of export procedures but also worked with extreme dedication and constant vigilance towards achieving these goals.

It was as the Minister of Science and Technology, Atomic Energy, Electronics, Space and Ocean Development and Biotechnology that Patil left an indelible impress of his personality on these portfolios and when he was re-elected to the Eighth Lok Sabha, he was given charge of these very same Ministries. Among other things, he was instrumental in strengthening and expanding the electronic industry. Endowed with qualities of diligence and perseverance, Patil would always go deep into the work and would involve himself thoroughly in the sphere of policy formulation. He was one of the members of the Committee on Technology Policy constituted to help the Union Government, public sector units, private sector and national laboratories to take decisions on matters relating to the development and import of technologies.

Patil carried his experience of the Ministry of Science and Technology to the Ministry of Defence in his new role as the Minister of State for Defence Production and Supplies. In fact, his

earlier experience as Minister of State for Defence stood him in good stead. By now, he was fully conversant with the functioning of national laboratories that were producing defence-related technologies. Patil's main emphasis was on the modernisation aspect of administration, application of new technologies and devising of new processes, besides installing the latest equipment to increase production, efficiency and productivity. At the same time, he gave due importance to the welfare schemes for the workers as he always felt that "the man behind the machine is more important".

In the General Elections of 1989, the Congress emerged as the single largest party in the Lok Sabha but fell short of the requisite majority to form the Government. The Janata Dal, with the support of the Bharatiya Janata Party, formed the Government and the Congress became the Opposition party. As a practice developed over the years, the Deputy Speaker of the House used to be from the Opposition. Since Patil had an excellent record as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, he became the unanimous choice of all the members for the office of the Deputy Speaker of the Ninth Lok Sabha. Patil always kept himself away from any controversy and this enabled him to stand high in the eyes of the ruling party and the Opposition alike. He was most often described by his fellow politicians by one word—"fair". Patil remained Deputy Speaker from March 1990 till March 1991. During this period, he was the Chairman, Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions and also the Library Committee. He was a member of the General Purposes Committee and the Business Advisory Committee during this period.

In less than two years' time, the country went to the polls again to elect a new Lok Sabha and the Indian National Congress formed the Government. Patil was the natural choice for Speakership and he was unanimously elected to the office on 10 July 1991 and his tenure lasted till 22 May 1996. All sections of the House were of the considered view that Patil would bring to the august office of the Speaker rich and varied experience and dignity and maturity.

Patil's commitment to strengthening the parliamentary institutions was evident to all-members, media or general public, legislative bodies of the State or parliamentary bodies of other



nations. As the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Patil was equally respected by both the ruling party and the Opposition. There were several occasions when the situation in the House became tense, but by his exemplary patience and extraordinary forbearance, he invariably succeeded in defusing the tension and the surcharged atmosphere.

During his Speakership, history was created when the Lok Sabha discussed and subsequently negated the first ever motion for the impeachment of a sitting Judge of the Supreme Court. Since this was the first such instance of its kind and one of great importance, Patil took particular care to ensure that proper procedures were laid down for considering the motion and held consultations with Leaders of various Parties and Groups on the issue.

In 1993, Patil gave an important decision under the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution regarding matters arising out of the petitions for disqualification against as many as twenty members. He felt that the case involved the membership of twenty parliamentarians who were the representatives of more than two crores of Indian citizens. They were elected by the people and as representatives of the people, were expected to live up to their expectations. The menace of floor-crossing, Speaker Patil stressed, if not controlled, could destroy the parliamentary and democratic system. He pointed out that the Tenth Schedule had served to a great extent the purpose for which it had been brought into existence but it had certain weak points and defects. He felt that the law should be made more comprehensive so as to provide for possible situations which could crop up in interpreting and enforcing it, such as matters pertaining to party activities outside the Legislature, the question of who should decide on cases relating to the anti-defection law and the applicability of the whip.

Another remarkable achievement of Patil's thoughtful efforts and of far reaching significance was the growth of the Committee System of Indian Parliament during his tenure. Though the proposal for the introduction of the Committee System had been there for several years and three Subject Committees had been constituted in the Eighth Lok Sabha, these efforts fructified when Patil took the initiative in the Tenth Lok Sabha and discussed the matter with

party leaders, members and others and formulated the scheme. Finally, on 31 March 1993, seventeen Departmentally related Standing Committees of Parliament were formally inaugurated. It was undoubtedly a major initiative in the direction of making the Parliament more powerful and effective in the exercise of its control over the Executive.

As a member, Patil was fully aware of the demands of constituents for attending to small developmental works in the constituency which involved a certain amount of money. Hence, when he became the Speaker, he took up this matter with full vigour and pursued it with the authorities concerned. The efforts eventually bore fruit in December 1993 when the MPs Local Area Development Scheme was announced in the Parliament. Under this Scheme, each member had at that time the choice to suggest to the District Collector works to the tune of one crore Rupees per year to be taken up in his or her constituency.

Patil gave a new thrust to the ongoing computerization and modernization efforts of the institutional arrangements of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, particularly the computerization of the information services to the members of Parliament. Not only were a large number of activities of the Lok Sabha Secretariat computerized under his leadership, a number of index based databases of information were developed to provide the parliamentarians non-partisan, objective, reliable and authoritative data on a continuous and regular basis.

Keeping in view the immediate and succinct information requirements of the parliamentarians to discharge their duties in an effective manner, members of the Tenth Lok Sabha were provided with note-book computers to get instant and up-to-date information on a wide range of activities, in organising their office activities, receiving/sending E-mails and fax, and having quick and accurate information on legislative and parliamentary matters on their desk instantly.

Although the Address by the President to the members of the two Houses of Parliament was telecast live for the first time on 20 December 1989 and subsequently on 12 March 1990, it was Speaker Patil who mooted for the first time a comprehensive

proposal highlighting the feasibility, technical viability, modalities and the general advantages of telecasting parliamentary proceedings. Thus, in order to bring Parliament nearer to the people, Lok Sabha proceedings began to be telecast live since 25 August 1994 by means of a low power transmitter, within a range of 15 km. from Parliament House, besides the live telecast of proceedings of the Question Hour of both the Houses of Parliament on alternate weeks throughout the country. Important debates in the House also began to be telecast during this period. Besides, the Question Hour started to be broadcast on the All India Radio beginning from the Monsoon Session of 1992.

As an upshot of telefilming and televising of parliamentary proceedings and production of films on parliamentary subjects, an Audio-Visual Unit, set up for the preservation and retrieval of the official audio-visual records of parliamentary proceedings and other parliamentary events, gained further momentum during Patil's tenure.

The need for providing adequate facilities to members so as to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively can hardly be over-emphasized. A Joint Parliamentary Committee to suggest Facilities and Remuneration for members of Parliament was constituted on the initiative of Speaker Patil. The Joint Committee recommended better amenities and facilities to members of Parliament in respect of daily allowance, telephone calls, water and electricity charges, air journey, etc.

Further with a view to providing a more effective, efficient and modern Research, Reference and Information Service to the members of Parliament Shivraj Patil performed the *Bhoomi Pujan* of the new Parliament Library Building (Sansadiya Gyanpeeth) on 17 April 1994.

Under another major initiative taken by Patil, proposals for installation of statues and portraits of eminent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Morarji Desai, Chaudhary Charan Singh, Rajiv Gandhi and others were approved by the Parliamentary Committee on Installation of Statues and Portraits of National Leaders in Parliament Complex. Several statues and portraits were thus unveiled during this time. On the birth anniversary of the national leaders whose portraits adorn the Central Hall of Parliament House, functions are being organised to

pay humble tributes to their sacrifices by a grateful nation which takes inspiration from their contribution to the welfare of the country and its people.

Patil's abiding commitment in strengthening parliamentarism came to the fore when the Indian Parliamentary Group set up an Outstanding Parliamentarian Award to be given every year to an eminent parliamentarian for his contribution in upholding the parliamentary traditions.

Patil repeatedly emphasized the importance of promoting inter-parliamentary relations and stressed that inter-parliamentary conferences and meetings provide forums for parliamentarians from all over the world to meet, discuss and exchange ideas and views on bilateral, multilateral and international matters. Under the leadership of Speaker Patil, India had the privilege of hosting as many as four major international Parliamentary Conferences: (i) the 37th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in September 1991; (ii) the 89th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in April 1993; (iii) the Sixth Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar in January 1994; and (iv) the First Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians, in July 1995. Besides strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation, these Conferences also brought to the fore many useful ideas which could serve the larger cause of parliamentary democracy.

Yet another initiative taken by Patil was granting of Research Fellowships to selected scholars for undertaking original studies on subjects of parliamentary interest. Under the scheme, the Lok Sabha Secretariat grants two Research Fellowships, one each in Hindi and English, every year on any of the following fields: Parliamentary Institutions (including State Legislatures): Evolution and Development; Parliamentary Rules, Practices and Procedures; Committee System; Communications between Parliament and the People; and Modern Techniques of Servicing the Parliaments.

Patil assumed office as the Union Minister of Home Affairs in May 2004, a position which he held till 30 November 2008. He was appointed as the Governor of Punjab on 22 January 2010; he has also been holding the charge of the Administrator of the Union territory of Chandigarh. He held additional charge as the Governor of Rajasthan from 28 April 2010 to 28 April 2012.

# 11

## P.A. SANGMA

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In a significant departure from the 49-year-old Indian parliamentary experience, the Eleventh Lok Sabha unanimously elected a member from the Opposition, Shri P.A. Sangma, as the Speaker. From a humble beginning in a small tribal village in Meghalaya, he rose to the exalted office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha by sheer dint of his merit, determination and tenacity. Affable, friendly and informal in disposition and endowed with a spontaneous sense of wit and humour, but firm when it came to ensuring orderly conduct of the House, Speaker Sangma has a charming personality which won him unstinted cooperation from all shades of political opinion represented in the Lok Sabha. His quest for maintaining decorum, dignity and autonomy of the House with dispassionate objectivity, earned him approbation nationwide.



**P.A. SANGMA**  
(23 May 1996—23 March 1998)

Purno Agitok Sangma was born on 1 September 1947 in village Chapahati in the picturesque West Garo Hills District of the State of Meghalaya in North East India. Growing up in the small tribal village, young Sangma realised early in life that he would have to struggle hard to rise in life. Inspired by his mother who inculcated in him the virtues of diligence, humility, honesty, and uprightness, he was convinced that education was the only way to progress and upward mobility in life. After completing his graduation from St. Anthony's College, he went to Dibrugarh University in Assam for his Masters degree in International Relations. Subsequently, he also obtained a degree in Law.

Sangma is a man of many parts, having been, in the course of his career, a lecturer, a lawyer and a journalist before he joined politics. He started his political life as a worker of the Congress Party and his rise through the ranks of the Party was phenomenal. In 1974, he became the General Secretary of the Meghalaya Pradesh Youth Congress; he also remained its Vice-President for some time. In recognition of his deep commitment to the party's ideals and also taking into account his organisational skills, he was appointed the General Secretary of the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee in 1975 and held that post till 1980.

Sangma came to the national political scene in 1977 when the country was preparing for the Sixth General Elections. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Tura constituency in his home State on the Congress ticket. The 30-year-old Sangma entered the portals of Parliament at a time when the nation was witnessing a major political change with the Congress Party losing power at the Centre for the first time since Independence. It was an opportune moment for a budding parliamentarian to make his mark and the articulate Sangma made full use of the opportunity to make an impact as a sincere and hard-working member.

In less than two years, national politics came a full turn and the Janata Party went out of office. The Charan Singh Government which assumed office subsequently lasted but a few months. In the mid-term elections of 1980, the Indira Gandhi-led Congress Party returned to power at the Centre. Sangma was re-elected to the Lok Sabha from the same constituency.

In the party organisation too, Sangma moved up fast and became the Joint Secretary of the All India Congress Committee in 1980, before he was inducted into the Union Cabinet and assumed the office of the Deputy Minister in charge of Industry in November 1980. After two years, he shifted to the Ministry of Commerce as Deputy Minister and held that post till December 1984.

Sangma was returned to the Eighth Lok Sabha in the General Elections of 1984. Recognising his potential and dedication to the Congress ideals, the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, inducted him into his Cabinet, this time as a Minister of State holding charge of Commerce and Supply. For a short while, he also functioned as the Minister of State for Home Affairs. Sangma took over as the Minister of State for Labour with Independent Charge in October 1986.

Ever amenable to reason and conciliatory in attitude, Sangma, however, was uncompromising when it came to safeguarding the national interests. It was no wonder then that during his tenure as the Labour Minister, there was a sharp decline in industrial strikes and lock-outs.

Known for his meticulous homework, complete mastery of the subject at hand and phenomenal memory for facts and details, Sangma was one Minister who could reply to a heated debate in Parliament without the aid of officials' slips from the Officers' Gallery. His amiability, thorough knowledge of the functioning of his Ministry and an inimitable sense of humour enabled him to tackle all challenges in Parliament. The Question Hour particularly brought out the best in him, handling the most ticklish matters with consummate ease. Throughout his Ministerial tenure, he retained the image of an honest and conscientious executive and always steered clear of any controversy.

Sangma had a remarkable understanding of the political realities of the entire North East, particularly of his home State. Though, starting 1977, he was in Delhi and busy in national politics, he never cut himself off from his roots and always kept track of political developments back home. It was this thorough understanding of the State politics which made the Congress Party leadership to requisition his services for Meghalaya in 1988.



That year, he returned to Meghalaya politics, this time as the Chief Minister heading a Coalition Government in a tumultuous period in the State's political history. In 1990, following the resignation of his Government, Sangma became the Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Assembly.

The call of the nation brought Sangma back to the Centre soon. He returned to the Lok Sabha in 1991 following the General Elections and was inducted into the Union Cabinet, this time by Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao. Sangma was given the Independent Charge of the Ministry of Coal. In February 1992, he was given the additional responsibility of assisting the Prime Minister in the Ministry of Labour. In the context of the Economic Reforms and Liberalisation Policy announced by the Union Government, his principal challenge was to sell the idea of economic reforms to a restive and apprehensive labour force. Tirelessly presiding over tri-partite Industrial Committee meetings, he made vigorous efforts to convince the labour of the inevitability of economic reforms. He emphasised the need for a new Management and Work Culture, the hallmark of which was the generation of wealth through efficiency, productivity and modernisation and sharing of wealth equitably.

Sangma assumed the Independent Charge of the Ministry of Labour in January 1993. He was elevated to the Cabinet rank (the first tribal to be elevated as such) in the Ministry of Labour in February 1995. As the Union Labour Minister, he headed the Tripartite Indian Delegation to the International Labour Conference in Geneva six times where he proved his mettle repeatedly. He was also elected the Chairman of the Asia and Pacific Region for the International Labour Ministers' Conference, 1994-95. When foreign investors had just begun to favour India as their destination and a furore was raised in some quarters over the so-called 'social clause' issue, Sangma, as Labour Minister, organised a Conference of Labour Ministers from Non-aligned and other Developing Countries in 1994-95. He brought about unanimity amongst them to hold the position that the leverage of international trade should not be used in respect of social issues like labour standards as that would be coercive.

In September 1995, Sangma took over as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, a post he held till the General Elections to the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

Sangma was elected to the Lok Sabha for the fifth time from the Tura constituency in the 1996 General Elections. On 23 May 1996, he was unanimously elected the Speaker of the Eleventh Lok Sabha with support cutting across all political parties. In half a century of Indian parliamentary history, he was the first member from the Opposition to hold the office of the Speaker.

Sangma, undoubtedly, had all the credentials for the august office—legal training, long experience as a parliamentarian as well as a Minister, reputation for impartiality, transparency, humility and wit and wisdom. From the time he assumed the office of the Speaker, he executed his responsibility with such assurance, it seemed that expertise on the job came to him instinctively. As a Speaker, he ensured that rules were observed by the members even in the midst of stormy debates. Parliamentary democracy, he observed, meant free debate, objective deliberations and healthy criticism and it was for the Speaker to ensure that these objectives were achieved.

As one who went beyond holding the balance between the Treasury and the Opposition benches to holding the balance of every individual member, Speaker Sangma won the admiration of both the ruling Coalition and the Opposition within a short span of time. He also displayed a tremendous sense of timing and history when he took laudable initiatives towards facilitating greater partnership between men and women in politics and in stressing the importance of ethics and probity in public life. With this in view, during his Speakership, he guided the formation of a Standing Joint Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women and also the constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Committee for considering the Constitution (Eighty-first Amendment) Bill, 1996 which sought to provide for  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies.

In order to maintain high traditions in parliamentary life, Sangma believed, members of Parliament were expected to maintain standards of conduct, both inside the House and outside. He was of the considered view that the ethical values that ought to permeate the legislative, the executive and the judicial wings of the constitutional system had a deep and lasting impact on the character, direction, credibility and future of democratic governance. During Sangma's tenure as Speaker, in a move which won encomiums from all quarters, an 8-member Study Group of the Committee

of Privileges was constituted to report on Ethics and Standards in Public Life. The Study Group's report was considered by the Committee of Privileges and adopted with some amendments. The report was later presented to the Twelfth Lok Sabha.

Another major initiative taken by Speaker Sangma was the convening of a Special Session of both the Houses of Parliament from 26 August to 1 September 1997 as part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence. The Session took stock of the achievements of five decades of Independence and also set a National Agenda for the future. Opening the Special Session, for the first time in the Indian parliamentary history, the Speaker addressed the House and stressed the need for a second freedom struggle—"this time the struggle should be for freedom from our own internal contradictions, between our prosperity and poverty, between the plenty of our resource endowments and the scarcity of their prudent management, between our culture of peace and tolerance and our current conduct sliding towards violence, intolerance and discrimination".

As Speaker, Sangma led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 42nd and 43rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences in Kuala Lumpur in August 1996, and in Port Louis in September 1997. He also led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Beijing in September 1996 and the 98th Conference in Cairo in September 1997. Sangma headed Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the Second Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians held in Islamabad in October 1997 and chaired the Inter-Parliamentary Specialised Conference of the IPU on "Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics", hosted by the Indian Parliament in New Delhi in February 1997. The first ever Conference of the Chairmen and Members of the Public Accounts Committees of SAARC Parliaments was also held in New Delhi in August 1997 during his eventful tenure.

Sangma was an extremely popular Presiding Officer, respected for his knowledge of rules and even more for his innate understanding of parliamentary traditions. He was equally at his best outside the House. He participated in many social gatherings and intellectual interactions organised by activist groups with great enthusiasm, guided objective and non-partisan debates on national issues and added a new social and public dimension to the office of the Speaker.

Sangma's concern for decorum, freedom and dignity of the Lok Sabha earned him the well-deserved reputation of an outstanding parliamentarian. What, however, made Sangma acceptable to political parties of all shades, as a Speaker, was his ability to earn the confidence of members on both sides of the House. His abiding concern for the underprivileged and his tireless endeavours to eradicate poverty and remove socio-economic inequalities have endeared him to the masses. Indeed, he is a man of the masses with an international standing. It is the human side of Sangma which has brought him a large number of friends amongst the people at large.

In a short span of less than two years, Sangma left an indelible impress of his personality on the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha. His hearty laugh, quick wit, boundless enthusiasm, cool demeanour and earthy wisdom made him a household name, with people from all over the country showering compliments on him for the rare skill with which he conducted the proceedings of the House. In the media too, his tenure as Speaker was highly appreciated.

Sangma continued to be a member in the 12th, 13th and 14th Lok Sabhas. A co-founder of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in May 1999, Sangma was elected to the 13th Lok Sabha as an NCP member. He contested and was elected to the 14th Lok Sabha under the banner of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC). On 10 October 2005, he resigned from the Lok Sabha as a member of AITC and was re-elected to the 14th Lok Sabha on 23 February 2006 as an NCP candidate.

As a parliamentarian, Sangma, by virtue of his interest as well as the offices he held, was active in several Parliamentary and Consultative Committees. He was a member of the Standing Committees on External Affairs, on Labour and Welfare, on Home Affairs, Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions, Parliamentary Consultative Committees on Home Affairs, External Affairs and Sub-Committee-I on External Affairs. He was also a member of the National Commission to Review the working of the Constitution, constituted in February 2000. Sangma resigned from the 14th Lok Sabha in March 2008 so as to spend more time in the politics of his home State, Meghalaya.

Sangma has been closely associated with various social organisations and educational institutions. During 1998-2004, he served as the Vice-President of the Indian Institute of Public Administration. He was the Editor of a Meghalaya daily, *Chandambeni Kalrang*. He has also edited two volumes of the book *India in ILO*. Recently on 10 April 2012 a book titled, “A Life in Politics : Selected Speeches and Lectures, 1979-2004” of P.A. Sangma has been released by the Vice-President of India in New Delhi.

Sangma received the *Michael John Roll of Honour* of the Tata Workers’ Union for “Distinguished Contribution to the Cause of Labour and to the Parliamentary System” in March 1997. He also received from the President of India, in May 1997, the Golden Jubilee Award of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) for outstanding contribution to the cause of the working class. Sangma was nominated ‘Man of the Year’ by *Competition Success Review* in 1998. He was also honoured with the “Saraswati National Eminence Award” in the category of Public Leadership by the South Indian Education Society, Mumbai, in January 2003.

At present, Sangma is a member of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, working as General-Secretary of the NCP and is associated with several social, cultural and educational organisations.

# 12

## G.M.C. BALAYOGI

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The members of the newly constituted Twelfth Lok Sabha met for the first time on 23 March 1998. The next day, the House took up the task of electing the new Speaker. Within 10 minutes of the item being taken up, Shri Ganti Mohana Chandra Balayogi was elected the Speaker of the Twelfth Lok Sabha by a voice vote. A lawyer by profession, Balayogi was the first person from the Scheduled Caste community to be elected to this high office, a fact which was widely applauded by all particularly in the context of the Golden Jubilee Year of India's independence. The significance of Balayogi's election was that he belonged neither to the ruling party nor to the second largest party nor even to the third force, the United Front. He was, in fact, the first Speaker who belonged to a regional party—the 12 member Telugu Desam party—which was extending support to the ruling coalition from outside.



**G.M.C. BALAYOGI**  
(24 March 1998—20 October 1999  
and  
22 October 1999—3 March 2002)

**B**orn in a farmer's family in the tiny village Yedeurulanka in the East Godavari district of the South Indian State of Andhra Pradesh on 1 October 1951, G.M.C. Balayogi did his graduation from Kakinada and obtained his post graduation and Law degree from Andhra University in Visakhapatnam.

Balayogi started his career as a lawyer in Kakinada and was in the Bar Association from 1980 to 1987. He was selected as a First Class Magistrate in 1985 but resigned from the job after undergoing the requisite training and resumed his practice. While at the Bar, Balayogi entered politics in 1982 as an activist of the Telugu Desam Party. Taking a plunge into politics for the first time, he took over as the Vice-Chairman of the Cooperative Town Bank in Kakinada in 1986. The next year, he was elected as the Chairman of the Zilla Praja Parishad Committee and continued in that position till 1991.

Balayogi's association with Parliament began in 1991 when he was elected to the Tenth Lok Sabha from the Amalapuram constituency in Andhra Pradesh. A first timer in the Lok Sabha, Balayogi took keen interest in learning about the Rules and Procedures of the House and also participated in the proceedings of the House.

In 1996, Balayogi was elected to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly in a bye-election. Subsequently, he was appointed as the Minister of Higher Education in the Government of Andhra Pradesh. As a Minister, he made sincere efforts to strengthen the education system and to streamline it. He believed that the role and responsibility of education and training in the employment context must be defined carefully. He was also of the view that the type of education imparted should correspond to the societal tasks and economic roles to be played by the educated.

Whether as a member of the Lok Sabha or as a member of the Legislative Assembly or as a Minister, Balayogi all along functioned with quiet efficiency and utmost equanimity. It was his firm belief that ethical norms must be observed by all those who are in public life. It was because of this conviction that owning



moral responsibility, he voluntarily tendered his resignation as Minister of Higher Education in Andhra Pradesh in the wake of a controversy over the alleged leakage of question papers in the Intermediate Examinations in the State, a decision which was widely acclaimed as an example of integrity and probity in public life. The Chief Minister, however, did not accept his resignation as he felt that Balayogi's services were required in the Ministry of Education and he was asked to continue in the same position.

Balayogi was closely associated with various social and cultural activities. Time and again, he organised relief and medical camps for the poor and the cyclone affected in his home State of Andhra Pradesh which was often ravaged by natural calamities. He was extremely concerned about the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden. Apart from concentrating on rural developmental programmes, he did his utmost to solve the drinking water problem in villages, improving communication facilities and providing employment to teachers and legal heirs of deceased government employees.

In 1998, Balayogi again contested the General Elections to the Lok Sabha and was returned from the Amalapuram constituency to the House for the second time. Balayogi was elected to the august office of the Lok Sabha Speaker on 24 March 1998 at one of the critical junctures in the country's political history. The Telugu Desam Party, to which he belonged, extended support to the ruling coalition from outside. There were as many as 40 political parties represented in the Twelfth Lok Sabha. On his re-election to the Thirteenth Lok Sabha in the 1999 General Elections, Balayogi was unanimously re-elected as the Speaker on 22 October 1999. Given the character of the House both the times, with the ruling coalition and the Opposition almost equipoised in terms of numerical strength, Speaker Balayogi, the youngest till date to occupy the office, found himself in a very demanding situation. The inclusion of a large number of regional parties displaying a wide variety of socio-political shades had obviously made it quite an awesome body to preside over. Yet, Balayogi conducted himself and the proceedings of the House with a great deal of dignity and grace. Through his deft handling, he handled many a ticklish situation, thereby earning rich encomiums from one and all.

Balayogi's stint as the Speaker of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Lok Sabha was remarkable in many ways. Speaker Balayogi had observed that his first and foremost duty would be to uphold and maintain the dignity and honour of the House. He assured all sections of the House that as the Presiding Officer, he would be guided by the concept of collective wisdom and his actions would be non-partisan. To achieve the objective, he sought the cooperation of all members and parties in setting new standards and conducting the House with a sense of justice and fair play. In a short span, Balayogi left an indelible impress of his personality on the office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and was popular and acceptable to political parties of all shades.

As Speaker, Balayogi was the Chairman of the Business Advisory Committee, Rules Committee and General Purposes Committee. Balayogi was also the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India.

Balayogi was very sensitive to the need for maintaining the dignity of the House. His efforts led to the formulation and addition of a new Rule to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha providing for automatic suspension of such members who come to the well of the House and create disorder. During his Speakership, an All India Conference of Presiding Officers, Chief Ministers, Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs, Leaders and Whips of Parties on 'Discipline and Decorum in Parliament and Legislatures of States and Union Territories' was held in New Delhi on 25 November 2001. The Conference adopted a Resolution encompassing a Code of Conduct for members of all Legislative Bodies in India. Balayogi had observed that the image of Parliament and its credibility as a representative institution largely depend on the role and functions of its members. He was a staunch advocate of probity and standards amongst the holders of public offices. To Balayogi goes the credit of constitution of the First Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha.

Another major initiative taken by Speaker Balayogi was the setting up of a Committee on MPLAD Scheme (Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) with a view to further streamlining the functioning of the Scheme and making it more effective.

During his tenure, Balayogi led Parliamentary Delegations to different countries. He led the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 99th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held at Windhoek in Namibia in April 1998; the 100th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Moscow in Russia in September 1998; 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Brussels in Belgium in April 1999; 103rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Amman in Jordan in April 2000; 104th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Jakarta in Indonesia in October 2000; 105th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Havana in Cuba in April 2001; and the 106th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso in September 2001. He also led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 3rd Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians at Dhaka in Bangladesh in March 1999 and to the 7th General Assembly of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on 'Environment and Development' in Chiang Mai in Thailand in November 1999. As Speaker, he led the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments at the United Nations General Assembly at New York from 30 August to 1 September 2000. He attended the meetings of the Standing Committee of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers in Tanzania in January 2001. He led the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 44th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conference in Wellington in New Zealand in October 1998; 45th CPA Conference in Trinidad and Tobago in Port of Spain in September 1999; 46th CPA Conference in London in September 2000; and the 47th CPA Conference in Australia in September 2001. He also attended the 16th Conference of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers held in Botswana in January 2002. Besides, he led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to a large number of countries. Balayogi was honoured with the decoration "WISSAM ALAOUITE OF THE ORDER OF GRAND OFFICER" during his visit to Morocco as leader of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation. While leading Parliamentary Delegations abroad, he addressed the Russian State Duma and the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Balayogi received many visiting Parliamentary Delegations in India and played host to them. He also facilitated the holding of some major Conferences of Parliamentarians. The Conference on 'Parliament and Media: Building an Effective Relationship', New Delhi, February 2000 and the Eighth General Assembly of

the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development, Hyderabad, November, 2000 were held during his tenure.

Shri Balayogi passed away on 3 March 2002 in a helicopter crash in Kaikalur, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.

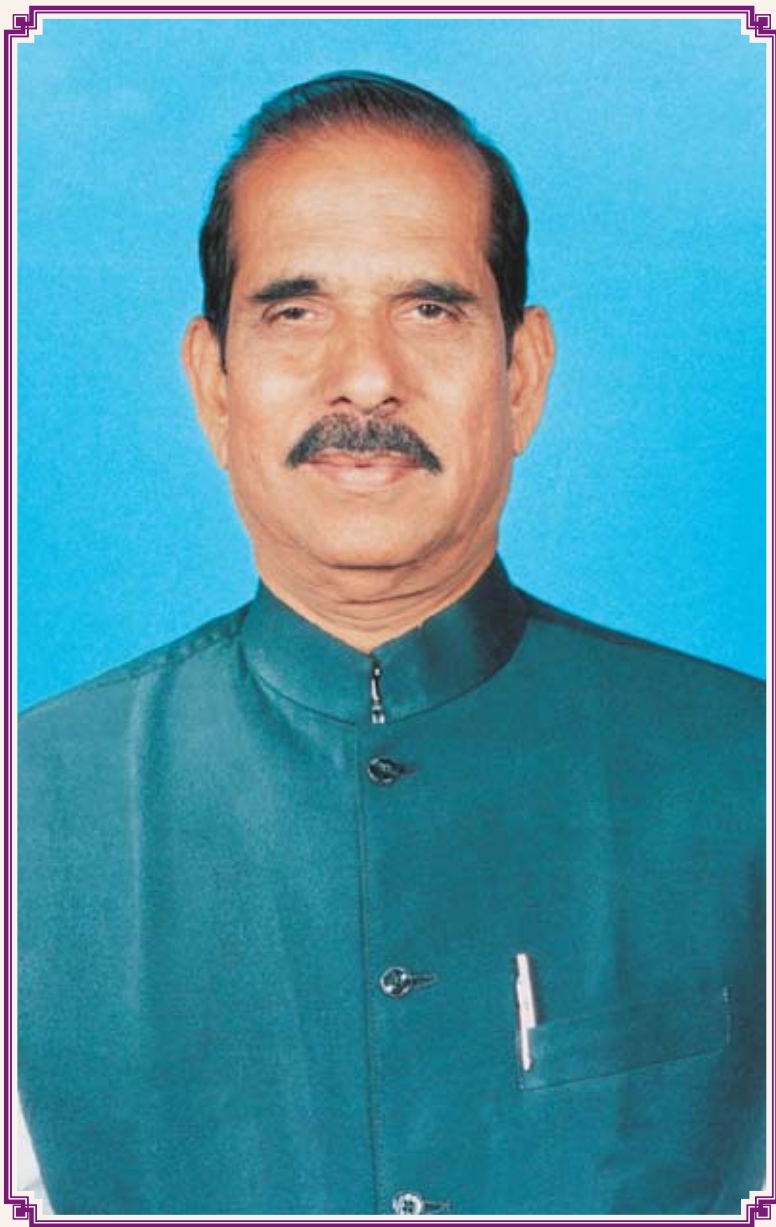
Shri Balayogi fully justified the deep faith reposed in him by the House with courage, conviction, dynamism and humility. Thus, he joined the ranks of his illustrious predecessors who have adorned the august Office of Speaker and strengthened parliamentary institutions and traditions with their rich and varied contributions.

# 13

## MANOHAR JOSHI

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Consequent upon the death of the then Lok Sabha Speaker G.M.C. Balayogi in a helicopter crash, Shri Manohar Joshi was unanimously elected the Speaker of Lok Sabha on 10 May 2002. Joshi had the distinction to have been chosen for this coveted position in his first term itself. Despite the fact that he was elected to the Office in a sudden and unexpected turn of events, Manohar Joshi rose to the occasion and handled all responsibilities with remarkable competence and finesse. His amiable personality, coupled with a disciplinarian attitude, went a long way in ensuring smooth and orderly proceedings of the House.



**MANOHAR JOSHI**  
(10 May 2002—2 June 2004)

**M**anohar Joshi was born in Nandvi in Raigarh district of Maharashtra on 2 December 1937. He was educated in Mumbai and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Law and a Master's Degree in Arts. He is proficient in Marathi, Hindi and English and well versed in Sanskrit. An outstanding speaker right from his school days, he is recognized everywhere for his oratorical skill. During his many decades in public life, he has spoken extensively on varied issues impinging on our national life, as also on international matters. His wit and humour, analytical skills and thorough understanding of issues are exceptional.

Manohar Joshi entered the political arena in 1967. He has been an active member and leader of the Shiv Sena for over four decades. The welfare and concerns of the city of Mumbai and the people have been an abiding concern of Joshi. This can be attributed to his long association with the city as a Municipal Corporator for eleven long years. He was Municipal Councillor in Mumbai during 1968-70 and Chairman, Standing Committee (Municipal Corporation) in 1970. In between, he held the prestigious office of the Mayor of Mumbai during 1976-77. He was also the Chairman of the All India Council of Mayors for a while. His close association with Mumbai city, his grassroots understanding of the developmental and other issues facing the city and its functional dynamics helped him articulate the cause of Mumbai after he became a member of the State Legislature.

Joshi's legislative career began in 1972 with his election to the Maharashtra Legislative Council. He was elected thrice to the Legislative Council between 1972 and 1989. As a member, he took part in debates on a wide spectrum of issues in the House. Of particular interest to him were issues relating to unemployment among the Marathi-speaking population, problems afflicting the city of Mumbai and Maharashtra, development of Vidarbha and other regions of the State, law and order, Marathi culture, Maharashtra-Karnataka border settlement, etc.

After serving three terms in the Legislative Council, Joshi was elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in 1990. His long stint in the Legislative Council saw Joshi emerging as an eminent legislator. During 1990-92, he served as the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly.

Manohar Joshi's political acumen, leadership qualities, administrative skill and thorough understanding of Maharashtra and the challenges before the State came to be recognized soon. When the Shiv Sena-BJP combine emerged victorious in the Legislative Assembly elections held in 1995, the honour of leading the Government was bestowed on Joshi and he served as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra during 1995-99. As Chief Minister, Manohar Joshi undertook various programmes for the welfare of all sections of society. His prime concern for the development of agriculture and industry was manifest clearly in the various schemes he started.

To tackle the gigantic problem of pollution in the city of Mumbai, he introduced the scheme of tree plantation in a big way. He was specially concerned with the disposal of garbage in the city and he worked towards the generation of electricity from garbage which was altogether a novel idea. He also authored a book *Swachh Mumbai, Harit Mumbai* in Marathi focussing on the problems relating to environment and the Clean Mumbai Movement.

After a long and successful stint in Maharashtra, Joshi was called to take up higher responsibilities at the national level in keeping with his rich and varied experience. In the 1999 General Elections, Joshi contested from the Mumbai North-Central Lok Sabha constituency on the Shiv Sena ticket and was elected to the Thirteenth Lok Sabha. Subsequently, he was inducted into the Union Government. He brought with him his long standing experience in the State Legislature of Maharashtra in various capacities to shoulder the onerous responsibility of Union Minister with the important portfolio of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

As Cabinet Minister, Joshi played a vital role in strengthening and expanding heavy industries and the public enterprises sector by taking many important policy decisions. Joshi, being very sensitive to and conscious of the changing world economic order, initiated a number of reform measures to improve corporate governance, accountability and autonomy in the public sector enterprises. He gave impetus to the MoU system which stressed on performance and accountability and spelt out unambiguously the goals and targets to be achieved during each year by an enterprise.



Even as Joshi was fully immersed in the work of the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, the call of duty came again to him to shoulder more important responsibilities. On 3 March 2002, the then Lok Sabha Speaker Shri G.M.C. Balayogi died in a helicopter crash in Andhra Pradesh. On 10 May 2002, the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee himself moved the motion seeking the election of Manohar Joshi as the new Speaker of Lok Sabha; the motion was seconded by the then Home Minister, L.K. Advani. When the motion was put for consideration and vote, the House adopted it unanimously and Shri Joshi was elected unopposed as the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

In his Address to the members of Parliament immediately after assuming the Office of Speaker, Joshi maintained that his prime concern would be the maintenance of discipline and decorum. He urged the members that the temptation to disrupt the business of the House to register protest on an issue must be avoided as it sends out a wrong message to the people that while they are confronted with countless problems, their representatives are wasting the precious time of Parliament.

Joshi, with his rich and varied experience of nearly four decades in public life, proved to be an outstanding Presiding Officer in upholding the dignity of the Office. From the day he assumed the Office of the Speaker, he sincerely endeavoured to carry all sections of the House with him in conducting the proceedings so as to enhance the prestige and dignity of Parliament. Suave and soft spoken and a man who believes in action, Joshi is known for his ability to handle difficult situations in a calm and cool manner.

Joshi unwaveringly strived to maintain the discipline and decorum of the House. With this in mind, he held periodic meetings with Leaders of various Parties and Groups to facilitate consensus in conducting the business of the House in the best possible manner. Apart from the regular meetings held on the eve of every Session, he also sought the cooperation of Leaders of all Parties and Groups on specific occasions to address emergent situations which could impact on the proceedings of the House.

With a view to having more constructive and meaningful debates, Joshi streamlined the proceedings of the House further by emphasizing the need to take up more Starred Questions for

oral answers in the House. He also facilitated a more purposeful 'Zero Hour' by allowing members to raise only matters of emergent national and international importance. He emphasised that matters relating to individual constituencies could be raised by members under Rule 377 by way of submissions, so that there could be a more productive utilization of the 'Zero Hour'.

Manohar Joshi paid special attention towards enhancing the efficacy of the Committee System. In line with this, he facilitated the organization of the Conference of Chairmen of the Committees on Petitions of Parliament and State Legislatures and the Conference of the Chairmen of the Committees on Estimates of Parliament and State Legislatures in New Delhi in November and December, 2002, respectively.

In addition to these, two Conferences of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India were held under Joshi's Chairmanship at Bangalore and Mumbai in June 2002 and February 2003, respectively, where important procedural matters and other related issues were discussed.

Another important event held under Joshi's able guidance was the hosting of the International Parliamentary Conference to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India. Delegates from as many as 77 countries participated in the Conference spread over three days.

Joshi emphasized the need to provide enhanced facilities and amenities to members of Parliament so that they could play a more meaningful and effective role as people's representatives. He also laid stress on computerization and modernization of the Services of the Secretariat. His efforts resulted in members being provided with the latest computer facilities. Live audio of the proceedings of the Lok Sabha were also made available on the Parliament Home Page during his tenure.

Joshi's expertise and political acumen had been used many a time to the advantage of Parliament in international forums. A great votary of peace and cooperation, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of promoting Inter-parliamentary cooperation. As the Speaker of Lok Sabha, he led Indian Parliamentary Delegations

to Geneva to the Special Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Dhaka and also to China, Croatia, Iran, Panama, Poland, Russia and Zambia. During this period, Parliamentary Delegations from Mexico, Suriname, Canada, Turkey, Greece, Lao PDR, Czech Republic, Ukraine and Indonesia visited our Parliament and exchanged views with Speaker Joshi and members of Parliament. During these interactions, Joshi forcefully articulated India's views and concerns on various topical issues.

As Speaker, Joshi was keen to honour national leaders and to promote their ideals. With this in mind, he facilitated the unveiling of the statues and portraits of several eminent personalities in the Parliament Complex. The statues of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan, Shri C.N. Annadurai, Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi, Shri Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar, Shri S. Satyamurti, Mahatma Basaveshwara, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Shaheed Hemu Kalani, Chaudhary Devi Lal and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule were unveiled in the Parliament Complex; similarly, portraits of Swatantryaveer Savarkar, Shri Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Baba Kharak Singh, Dr. K.M. Munshi, Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah Pantulu and Master Tara Singh were unveiled.

Manohar Joshi made a distinctive contribution in upholding the high traditions of the august Office of the Speaker, besides enhancing the prestige and dignity of the Parliament of the largest working democracy in the world. As Speaker of Lok Sabha, Manohar Joshi acted as the true guardian of the House and strived for the promotion of a decorative ethos at all levels, both within the House and outside.

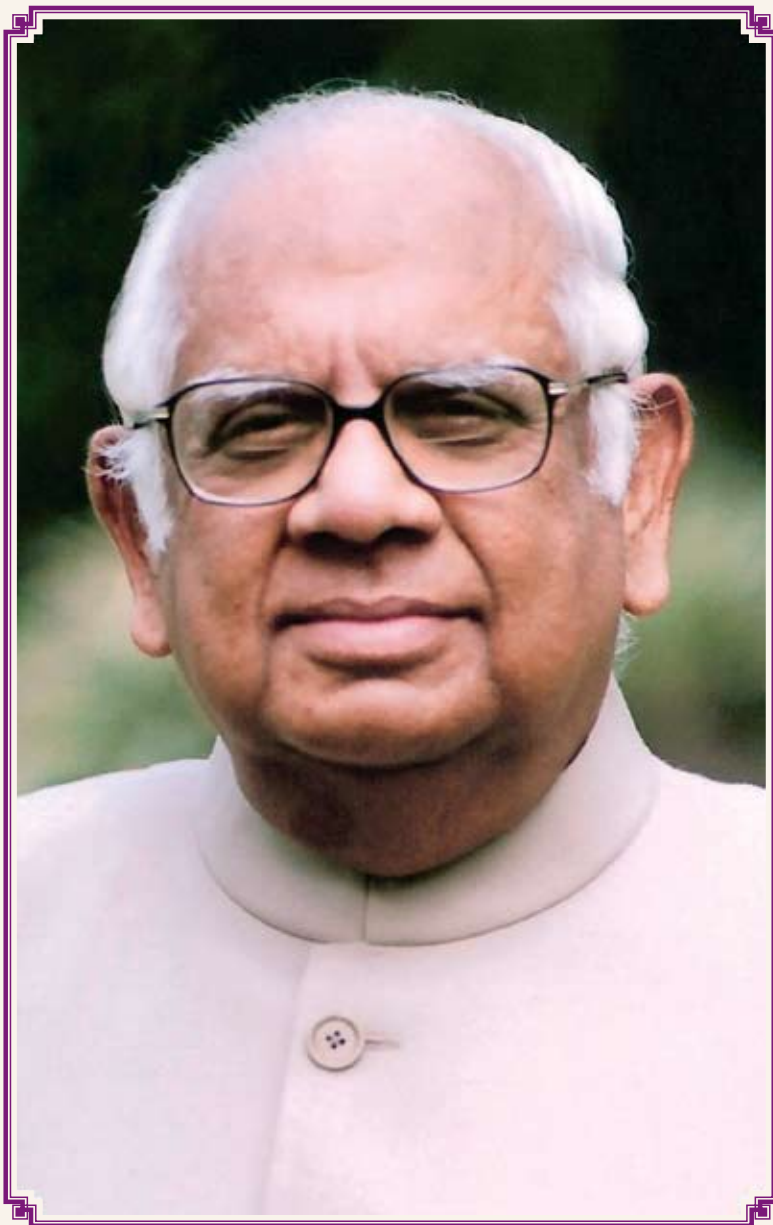
Manohar Joshi continues to be active in the parliamentary front and was a member of the Rajya Sabha from April 2006 to April 2012. During this period he was Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and member of the Committee on Urban Development, the Business Advisory Committee, the General Purposes Committee and the Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Urban Development.

# 14

## SOMNATH CHATTERJEE

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A sagacious leader, an articulate parliamentarian, an eminent lawyer, and a committed trade union leader, Shri Somnath Chatterjee has been a towering figure in the national life. His journey from the 5th Lok Sabha to the august office of the Lok Sabha Speaker has been a saga of nearly forty years of long and distinguished parliamentary life.



**SOMNATH CHATTERJEE**  
(4 June 2004—1 June 2009)

Somnath Chatterjee was born on 25 July 1929 to Shri N.C. Chatterjee and Smt. Binapani Debi. His father, Shri N.C. Chatterjee, a distinguished member of Parliament of the First, Third and Fourth Lok Sabha, was an outstanding orator who enriched the parliamentary polity by his brilliance and articulation. Somnath Chatterjee had his education in Calcutta and the United Kingdom. He completed his Masters from Cambridge and Barrister-at-Law from Middle Temple, U.K.

Somnath Chatterjee began his career as a lawyer and joined active politics in 1968, when he became a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). His ascendance in national politics began with his election to the Fifth Lok Sabha in 1971. He had served as a member of successive Lok Sabhas, got elected for the tenth time to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha in 2004. He was the Leader of the CPI(M) in Lok Sabha from 1989 to 2004 and remained party's leading spokesman for several years. He was also the Chairman of the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation from 1994 to 2004.

A versatile parliamentarian, well versed with the rules of procedure and conduct of business of the House, Somnath Chatterjee also richly contributed to the strengthening of the Committee System in Parliament. He served with distinction as the Chairman, Committee on Subordinate Legislation; Committee of Privileges; Committee on Railways; Committee on Communications (3 terms); Committee on Information Technology (2 terms); Committee on Rules; Business Advisory Committee and General Purposes Committee. He was also an active member of various other Parliamentary and Consultative Committees, particularly the ones requiring expertise in law.

In recognition of his immense contributions towards strengthening of parliamentary democracy and parliamentary institutions in the country, Somnath Chatterjee was honoured with the 'Outstanding Parliamentarian Award' in the year 1996.

The newly-constituted Fourteenth Lok Sabha met for the first time on 2 June 2004, with Somnath Chatterjee in the Chair after his appointment as the Speaker *pro tem* by the President of India.

The date for holding the election to the Office of the Speaker was fixed as 4 June 2004. On 4 June 2004, Balasaheb Vikhe Patil, the newly appointed Speaker *pro tem*, performed the duties of the Office of the Speaker. The Leader of the Congress Party, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, moved the Motion proposing the election of Somnath Chatterjee as the Speaker. When the Motion was put before the House for consideration and vote, it was unanimously adopted by the House and Somnath Chatterjee was chosen as the Speaker of the Fourteenth Lok Sabha.

By electing Shri Chatterjee, the House had created an unprecedented history, as it was, for the first time, the Speaker *pro tem* was elected as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. It was also a significant event that the Speaker was chosen on the basis of consensus among political parties.

Somnath Chatterjee undoubtedly possessed all the credentials for the august office — his long and rich parliamentary experience, his legal acumen and vast knowledge of Constitution, his commitment to strengthening parliamentary institutions and above all, his straightforwardness and fair-mindedness.

Somnath Chatterjee initiated several procedural reforms to facilitate smooth and orderly functioning of the House and also to provide more opportunities to the members in discharging their responsibility as people's representatives in an effective manner. He started a new practice of holding daily meetings with the Leaders of Parties and Groups in his Chamber, half-an-hour before the start of the day's proceedings during the Sessions, which indeed proved to be very useful in obviating disruptions and disturbances in the House.

In order to sensitize the members about the usage of pattern of the time of the House, Somnath Chatterjee started an innovative practice of making a weekly Statement of the business transacted by the House on every Tuesday. He also made procedural reforms to make the Question Hour more participatory. The device of 'Zero Hour' was streamlined and adopted in a phased manner during his tenure to enable the members to raise matters in an orderly fashion.

To ensure greater and effective accountability of the Government's functioning, Somnath Chatterjee restructured the Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) of Parliament. Apart from

increasing the number of DRSCs from seventeen to twenty-four, he introduced Direction 73A which makes it mandatory for the Ministers to make Statements in the House once in six months regarding the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committees with regard to the Ministries concerned. Also, to address the growing concern regarding Study Tours of the Parliamentary Committees which had drawn criticism and media attention, Shri Somnath Chatterjee issued two sets of guidelines to streamline them, viz. *the Guidelines to Chairmen, Parliamentary Committees and Guidelines regarding Expenditure incurred by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha Secretariats on Study Tours of Parliamentary Committees*.

With a view to providing a platform to the members to have interaction with experts and with key officials of the Ministries and the civil society on the matters of national importance, the Parliamentary Forums on Water Conservation and Management; on Youth; on Children; on Population and Public Health; and on Global Warming and Climate Change were constituted during his Speakership.

Further, to facilitate exchange of views on issues of topical concern between the members of Parliament and experts in diverse fields, Somnath Chatterjee initiated the Lecture Series for members of Parliament under the aegis of the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training (BPST). The Lecture Series, inaugurated on 17 August 2005, have not only helped members in playing a proactive role in addressing these problems meaningfully but also enhanced the level of debate in the House. He also initiated a series of Round Table Discussions to involve all the stakeholders of democracy to make it more participatory and responsive. Two Round Table Discussions on *Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy* were held during his Speakership.

To bring about greater transparency in the working of Parliament and in order to ensure best adherence to the objectives of the RTI Act, 2005, an Information Cell was created in the Lok Sabha Secretariat on 14 November 2005.

As the Speaker, Somnath Chatterjee led Parliamentary Delegations to the 111th, 112th, 113th, 115th and 117th Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Besides participating in the



18th and 19th Conferences of the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth Parliaments in January 2006 and January 2008, he led Parliamentary Delegations to the 50th, 51st, 52nd, and 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conferences. Shri Chatterjee addressed the Wilton Park Conference in June 2006 in U.K. He also led the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to Helsinki for the celebrations of the 100th Anniversary of the Parliamentary Reforms in Finland in June 2006. As Speaker, he led Parliamentary Delegations to Japan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Germany, China, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Cuba and Bulgaria.

To uphold the dignity of the nation as well as to enhance the level of discussions during the international conferences, Somnath Chatterjee took several steps during the visits of Indian Parliamentary Delegations (IPDs). It was at his initiative that more and more preparatory briefing meetings were held to ensure that the delegates are fully equipped to participate in the deliberations effectively. Also it was primarily due to his special diplomatic efforts that Shri Hashim Abdul Halim, the Speaker of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, was elected by an overwhelming majority as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) on 2 September 2005 for a three-year term. This honour came to an Indian delegate after twenty years. He also initiated the practice of laying the Reports of the International Conferences and visits by the Indian Parliamentary Delegations abroad on the Table of the House. During his term, forty-four Friendship Groups were constituted with Parliaments of other countries with the main objective of enhancing contacts and interactions among parliamentarians.

In 2005, as the Presiding Officer of the Lok Sabha, Shri Chatterjee was elected the Vice-President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. In September 2006, he was elected the President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Under his leadership and able guidance, India successfully hosted the 53rd CPA Conference in New Delhi in September 2007. Seven Conferences of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India, including two Emergency Conferences, were also held under his Chairmanship to discuss procedural and other related matters.

Shri Chatterjee has been keen to honour national leaders and to promote their ideals and values. With this in mind, he facilitated the unveiling of the statues and portraits of several eminent personalities in the Parliament House Estate. The statues of Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Guru Rabindranath Tagore, Maharana Pratap, Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar, Kittur Rani Channamma, Vithalbhai Patel, Acharya Narendra Deva, S.A. Dange, Indrajit Gupta, A.K. Gopalan, M.G. Ramachandran, Bhupesh Gupta, Murasoli Maran, Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj and a bust of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were unveiled during the Speakership of Shri Chatterjee. Besides, the portraits of Subramaniam Bharathi, Sarat Chandra Bose, Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri, Vasudev Balwant Phadke, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Damodaram Sanjivayya, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh, Biju Patnaik, Bipin Chandra Pal, the joint portrait of Violet and Joachim Alva, Satguru Ram Singhji, Biplabi Leela Roy, Giani Gurumukh Singh Musafir, Babu Veer Kunwar Singh, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Swaran Singh, Shaheed Jayee Rajguru, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Prof. Hiren Mukerjee were also unveiled.

Under the guidance of Speaker Shri Somnath Chatterjee, an Annual Parliamentary Lecture was instituted in memory of eminent parliamentarian Prof. Hiren Mukerjee. The inaugural Lecture on 'Demands of Social Justice' was delivered by the Nobel Laureate and Professor of Economics and Philosophy at the Harvard University, Prof. Amartya Sen, in the Central Hall of Parliament House on 11 August 2008. A portrait of Prof. Hiren Mukerjee was also unveiled on the occasion. During the period, monographs on Prof. Hiren Mukerjee, Babu Jagjivan Ram, Madhu Dandavate, Indrajit Gupta and Madhu Limaye were brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat to honour these eminent parliamentarians. In addition, several publications including, *Parliament of India, 60 Years of India's Independence, Speaker Rules, Constitution Amendment in India*, Deluxe edition of *the Constitution of India*, *Commemorative Souvenir* on the occasion of 53rd CPA Conference and Special Supplement of the *Parliamentarian* were also brought out.

Somnath Chatterjee always underscored the need to disseminate Parliament's role and functioning among people and therefore, took keen interest in the launch of the Lok Sabha Television Channel

(LSTV) in 2006. The 24-hour Channel, besides telecasting the live proceedings of the House, is working as an interface between the 'People, Parliament, and the Government'. It is the only TV Channel in the world to be owned and operated by Parliament and enjoys full autonomy. The setting-up of the hi-tech story-telling Parliament Museum is yet another initiative taken by Shri Chatterjee. The Museum depicts the continuum of democratic ethos and institutional development in India. As an extension of the efforts of communicating Parliament more effectively, the regular interactions between the editors and senior correspondents of the media and the Speaker were also institutionalized during Shri Chatterjee's tenure.

On the initiative of Somnath Chatterjee, on August 2007, a Children's Corner was set up in the Parliament Library Building with the objective of inculcating and encouraging good reading habits among children.

For maintaining the Parliament's sanctity and putting in place a foolproof security system, several measures were taken by Speaker Shri Chatterjee; important among these include the installation of Perimeter Protection System by specifically making barbed electric wire fencing along the perimeter wall of the Parliament Complex; introduction of Proper Control Access System for vehicles; creation of Central Command Station to look after the operation of all the newly-installed technical gadgets; and the establishment of the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Pilot Project.

An able administrator, Shri Chatterjee undertook several administrative reform measures in regard to the Lok Sabha Secretariat. A comprehensive Cadre Review of the Lok Sabha Secretariat Service was undertaken at the Hon'ble Speaker's initiative with a view to re-assessing the manpower requirement, effective deployment, charting improved career prospects and upgrading functional efficiency, transparency and accountability. A Grievance Redressal Mechanism was set up in 2005 to enable staff to ventilate and resolve their service related problems. A new recruitment process at par with the examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission to attract youngsters across the country and a transfer policy for the staff has also been initiated. Similarly, special emphasis has been laid on the best available training of the officers. Under his visionary leadership, meritorious awards and financial assistance

were initiated for the education of the outstanding students of Group C and D employees and foundation stones for an extension to Parliament House Annexe and a new residential complex for Lok Sabha employees at R.K. Puram, New Delhi, were laid.

Shri Chatterjee, as the custodian of parliamentary rights and privileges, diligently worked for maintaining the dignity and authority that Parliament wields under the country's constitutional framework. He always stood for and defended the supremacy of Parliament. When a dispute arose, over the decision of the Governor in appointing the Chief Minister in Jharkhand, a three-Judge bench of the Supreme Court passed an interim order which *inter alia* contained directions about fixing of agenda of the House, maintenance of order in the House and the video recording of the proceedings of the House. These relate to such issues on which, under the Constitution and the rules and by Convention, decisions fall within the exclusive domain of the Presiding Officers of the Legislative Bodies. Somnath Chatterjee, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and also the Chairman of the Conference of Presiding Officers called a one-day Emergency Conference of the Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India on 20 March 2005 to discuss the issue and the relationship between the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Speaker stressed that the Legislature's supremacy, one of the cardinal principles of parliamentary democracy, as enshrined in the Constitution, should be clearly asserted. His views were fully endorsed by the Emergency Conference of the Presiding Officers through a unanimous resolution.

Another significant decision taken by Somnath Chatterjee as Speaker, pertained to the 'cash for query' case. On 23 December 2005, ten members involved in the cash for query case were expelled by the House from the membership of the Lok Sabha after the recommendations of an *ad hoc* Parliamentary Inquiry Committee constituted for the investigation of the matter. These expelled members subsequently filed writ petitions in the Supreme Court challenging their expulsion. The Apex Court directed that notices be issued to all the parties, including the Speaker, Lok Sabha. Shri Chatterjee, however, decided that the Secretariat would not accept any such notice as in his view the issue was non-justiciable since the Constitution provides, *inter alia*, that votes given by the members cannot be questioned in any judicial proceedings and that the House had full right and facility to deal with all matters

regarding discipline and misconduct of the members. The decision taken by Shri Chatterjee was unanimously supported by the All Party Meeting of the Leaders as well as the Emergency Conference of the Presiding Officers held on 4 February 2006. In a subsequent development, the Supreme Court *vide* their judgement delivered on 10 January 2007 dismissed the writ petitions filed by the expelled members and upheld the right of the Legislatures to take disciplinary action against the members but also held that in some given areas, the Courts may intervene with the decision of the Legislatures.

In another important decision by Shri Chatterjee as the Presiding Officer, four members of Parliament, who allegedly indulged in improper conduct in the matter of implementation of Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) Scheme, were suspended from the membership of the House for a certain period and it was recommended to the Government to suitably revise the guidelines governing the MPLAD Scheme with a view to plugging its loopholes and lacunae.

In April 2007, some members were accused of various misdemeanours. At the Speaker's initiative, an eleven-member Committee of the members of Lok Sabha was constituted to inquire *inter alia* into the instances of misconduct of members of Lok Sabha, including misuse of parliamentary privileges and facilities by them, and also to look into the desirability of defining what acts would amount to misconduct on the part of the member. The recommendations made by this Inquiry Committee in its reports were adopted by the House.

Shri Chatterjee's reasoned and considered decisions regarding expulsion of members under the anti-defection law, strictly adhering to higher principles of the Tenth Schedule, were admirable. His conduct of the proceedings of the House during the Trust Vote of 21-22 July 2008 evoked tremendous appreciation from a cross section of citizens.

An ardent champion of the genuine rights of the working class, Shri Somnath Chatterjee is now actively associated with a large number of socio-cultural, educational and professional institutions and trade unions. Through these organizations, he is engaged in constructive activities, such as the uplift of the deprived and the downtrodden, eradication of illiteracy, improvement in educational policies, etc.

# 15

## MEIRA KUMAR

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In the year 2009 a new chapter was added to the glorious history of our Parliament with the election of Shrimati Meira Kumar as the first lady Speaker of Lok Sabha. It was for the first time that the House, in one voice, unanimously elected a woman to this high constitutional position.



**MEIRA KUMAR**  
(3 June 2009—till date)

Meira Kumar was born on 31 March, 1945, in Patna to Babu Jagjivan Ram, a leading freedom fighter, crusader of social justice, political visionary and thinker of India and Shrimati Indrani Devi, a social worker, freedom fighter and writer. Meira's schooling began in the formative years of Independent India, often at the feet of her father, who held many important portfolios in the Union Cabinet. A diligent student, she did her LL.B and earlier an M.A. in English from Delhi University. She is married to Shri Manjul Kumar, a lawyer in the Supreme Court and has a son and two daughters. She joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1973 and served at the Embassy of India, Madrid, High Commission of India, London and the Ministry of External Affairs. Many people may not know this but she also has Advanced Diploma in Spanish and is fluent in several languages aside from Hindi, English, Sanskrit and Bhojpuri.

As a member of the Indo-Mauritius Joint Commission, she visited Mauritius in 1984 and as a member of the official delegation, accompanied the President of India on a state visit to Mauritius; People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic, 1984.

An ardent votary of value-based public life, one finds in Meira Kumar a deep intellectual grasp of issues coupled with a zealous compassion for those living on the margins of society. She has, time and again, demonstrated an unflagging determination to secure human rights and undo social inequalities. As Chairperson, National Drought Relief Committee of the Congress Party, she launched a Family Adoption Scheme during the century's worst drought in 1967. This resulted in many drought-affected families being helped and supported by the affluent.

Meira Kumar made her political debut in 1985 when she was elected to the 8th Lok Sabha in a bye-election from Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh. She represented the constituency of Karol Bagh in Delhi twice during her membership of the 11th and 12th Lok Sabha. In 2004 she entered the 14th Lok Sabha with a record winning margin from Sasaram in Bihar. It was an emotional victory



as people of Sasaram had unfailingly elected her late father for 50 long years. Her term in the 15th Lok Sabha is also from the Sasaram Parliamentary Constituency. Meira Kumar belongs to a rare group of leaders to have won Lok Sabha elections from three different States. She also served as General Secretary, All-India Congress Committee, 1991-92, 1996-99 and was member, Congress Working Committee, 1991-2000, 2002-04.

A true adherent of Babuji's philosophy of progress through social justice, her rise to one of the highest elected offices in the country is the result of a dedicated dialogue she has kept alive with India, its diversity, culture and complexities. In the 27 years since her political debut, she has emerged as a determined advocate of a secular and democratic India. Always striving towards an equal and inclusive society, Meira Kumar has been a tireless worker for the cause of women's empowerment, a casteless society and those on the margins of development. Blessed with wit and a sense of humour, she also has the rare ability to address issues both objectively and with great empathy. She has since assuming the Office of Speaker, Lok Sabha, elevated parliamentary discourse, enriched House proceedings and the working of Parliamentary Committees with her exceptional ideas, broad intellect and power of persuasion. Committed to the traditions of Parliament, she has earned the admiration of Parliamentarians across party lines. She has through her own example brought renewed respect for dignity and decorum in the country's highest Legislative body.

Throughout her long political career, Meira Kumar has served on several Parliamentary Committees as an active member. She played a distinctive role in strengthening the Consultative Committee, Ministry of External Affairs in 1986-89 and 1996-98; Public Accounts Committee during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98; Joint Committee on the Empowerment of Women and its Sub-Committee on Education and Health Programmes for Women in 1998-99; and Committee on Home Affairs and its Sub-Committee on Personnel Policy of Central Para-Military Forces (CPMFs) for the year 1998-99; Court of University of Delhi, 1996-98; Advisory Council, Delhi Development Authority, 1998-99; Court of Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1996-98; Rajghat Samadhi Committee,

1998-99. She has also graced many senior positions, including that of Union Cabinet Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment in 2004-09. She was Union Cabinet Minister for Water Resources in 2009 before her nomination for the office of the Speaker, Lok Sabha. Interestingly, the motion to elect Meira Kumar as Speaker of Lok Sabha was also moved by a woman—none other than UPA Chairperson, Sonia Gandhi.

Felicitating her on the occasion, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh described her election as a tribute to India's womanhood. He termed it historic because, for the first time a woman member was elected to this high constitutional position. Recalling the legacy of her illustrious father, whose wisdom, knowledge and experience were an asset to every Government he worked for, he said that she possessed the same qualities of heart and head that her father was known for. He hoped that the charm, grace and tact that she acquired as a Diplomat, Parliamentarian and a Minister would stand her in good stead in calming the occasionally frayed tempers of the House.

The leaders who facilitated Meira Kumar on the occasion included Leader of the House—Pranab Mukherjee, Leader of Opposition—Lal Krishna Advani, Basudeb Acharia, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Kumari Mamata Banerjee, Arjun Charan Sethi, T.R. Baalu, Chandrakant Khaire, Dr. M. Thambidurai, Sharad Pawar, Sharad Yadav, Nama Nageswara Rao, Gurudas Dasgupta, Lalu Prasad, Dr. Ratan Singh Ajnala, E. Ahamed, Sharifuddin Shariq, H.D. Deve Gowda, Asaduddin Owaisi, Inder Singh Namdhari and Dr. Bali Ram. They underscored the point that for the first time, a woman with rich and varied experience as a diplomat and accomplished administrator has occupied an exalted position in India's temple of democracy. They hoped that being the illustrious daughter of a distinguished and eminent parliamentarian, she would protect the interests of all sections of the House.

Meira Kumar is an exponent of international cooperation and has been part of various Government and party delegations as well as Parliamentary delegations at bilateral and multilateral fora.

She was Member of the Government of India Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, USA, 1994. As a Minister, she

visited Belgium 2008, Mauritius 2007, Egypt 2007 and accompanied President, Dr. Abdul Kalam on state visit to Tanzania and South Africa 2004. She was a member of All Party Delegation of MPs to Conference on Towards Détente in the Sub-Continent, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1999.

She led the Indian National Congress Party Delegations to POSSAC Conference, Greece, 1996; World Conference on Solidarity with Cuba, Havana, 1994; Inaugural Function of the Indian National Congress of America, San Francisco, 1994; Socialist International Conference, Sweden, 1989 and was a Member of the Congress Party Delegation to Mauritius for MMM (the ruling party) Conference, 1993 and 1987.

She headed the Indian Non-Government Delegation to United Nations Preparatory Committee Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and led the Indian delegation to the Conference on Democracy, Detroit, USA, 1989; and Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Geneva, 2000.

She was the chief speaker at the Golden Jubilee celebration of India's Independence, University of Hull, England 1997 and Guru Ravidas Birth Anniversary celebrations, United Kingdom, 1993.

A former diplomat, Meira Kumar has added a new dimension to Parliamentary diplomacy by evocatively projecting India's views at various bilateral and multilateral fora. She has received twenty-four foreign delegations in the Parliament and has interacted with Parliamentarians across the globe.

As Speaker, Meira Kumar was the Leader of the Indian Parliamentary Delegations to New Zealand, Pakistan, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay 2012; Iran, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, Vietnam, Mexico, United Kingdom 2011; Mongolia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Bhutan and Mauritius 2010; and Austria 2009.

She led India Parliamentary Delegations to Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Mid-Year Executive Committee Meetings, Nuku'a Lofa Tonga 17 April—21 April, 2012; 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Kampala, Uganda, 31 March—5 April, 2012; 21st Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers

Conference, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago 7-12 January, 2012; 125th Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union, Bern, Switzerland, 16-19 October, 2011; 124th IPU Assembly held in Panama City, Panama, 15-20 April, 2011; 57th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, London, United Kingdom, 21-28 July, 2011; Second G-20 Speakers' Consultation Meeting, Seoul, South Korea, 18-20 May, 2011; 3rd CPA Asia Regional Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 11-16 February, 2011; Meeting of Standing Committee of CSPOC, Douglas, Isle of Man, 12-15 January, 2011; 123rd IPU Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland, 1-8 October, 2010; 56th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, September, 2010; Sixth Annual Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament, Bern, 16-17 July, 2010; Fourth and Fifth (Final) Meeting of the Preparatory Committee, Geneva, 18-20 July, 2010; 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, Geneva, 19-21 July, 2010; Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Mid-Year Executive Committee Meeting, Mbabane, Swaziland, 8-13 May, 2010; 122nd IPU Assembly, Bangkok, Thailand, March-April, 2010; Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Third World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, New York, USA, 16-17 November, 2009; 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva, October, 2009; 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Arusha, Tanzania, September-October, 2009; and Meeting of Speakers of Lower Chambers of G-8 and outreach countries, Rome (Italy), 12-13 September, 2009.

Under Meira Kumar's Chairpersonship, India had the privilege of hosting 20th CSPOC Conference at New Delhi in January, 2010. She also presided over the Fourth India and Asia Regions Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference at Raipur, Chhattisgarh in October, 2010. She was the Chief Guest at the 13th Conference of the North-East Region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (NERCPA) at Itanagar/Neharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh in April, 2011. India had the honour of hosting the Fifth Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians at New Delhi in July, 2011 under her presidentship. Later in the year she inaugurated the 22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar in New Delhi in November, 2011. The 74th, 75th and 76th Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India were also organized in Bhopal, Srinagar and Jaipur respectively under her guidance.

Meira Kumar, in her effort to streamline the parliamentary procedures, has introduced several initiatives to strengthen the parliamentary edifice.

On 27 April, 2010, before the submission of the Outstanding Demands for Grants relating to the Ministries/Departments to the vote of the House, Meira Kumar made the following observation:

“Shri Gurudas Dasgupta, Hon’ble Member, in a letter addressed to me raised an important point relating to the right of the members of the House in moving cut motions on the demands for grants which are guillotined. He quoted Article 113 of the Constitution and stated that since the Constitution vests in the House of the People the power to assent to a demand subject to reduction of the amount specified in that demand, the members have the right to move cut motions on any demand submitted to the House for its approval.

This point was also raised in the Business Advisory Committee Meeting held on 15 April, 2010, by Smt. Sushma Swaraj, the Leader of Opposition, and other Hon’ble Members. I had promised to examine this issue in terms of the Constitutional provisions and Rules and practices followed in the House.

The practice followed so far in the House has been that the cut motions in respect of the Demands for Grants which are to be guillotined, are not circulated and thus not allowed to be moved. But, I did not find any rule which bars the moving of cut motions on demands which are not discussed in the House.

The right to move a cut motion flows from the power vested in the House under Article 113 of the Constitution to assent to any demand subject to a reduction of the amount specified in that demand. This Article or any of the Rules does not make any distinction between the demands which are discussed in the House and those which are guillotined. Article 113 uses the words ‘any demand’. It is thus clear that cut motions can be moved on all demands submitted to the House under Article 113(2).

I have given careful consideration to the rules as well as the practice that has been followed all these years in respect of cut motions. I have also examined the constitutional provision which vests the power in the House of the People to reduce any demand submitted to the House. Constitutional right is a superior right and it overrides practices. Right to move cut motions is an important right of the Members of the House provided in the Constitution which cannot be curtailed. I am, therefore, allowing the cut motions to be moved on demands which are to be guillotined.

List of Cut Motions to the Outstanding Demands of various Ministries/Departments have already been circulated. In the normal course, Members are given 15 minutes' time to send slips at the Table indicating the serial number of the Cut Motions which they intend to move. However, in the present case, since it is not possible to give time to the Members to send slips at the Table indicating the serial number of the Cut Motions they would like to move, all the Cut Motions to the Outstanding Demands of various Ministries/Departments, for which notices have been given and which have been circulated, will be treated as moved. And, these cut motions will be disposed of before the Outstanding Demands are put to the vote of the House."

Accordingly, all the Cut Motions to the Outstanding Demands, which had been circulated, were treated as moved and were put to vote together and negatived. This was an unprecedented procedural development and the Hon'ble Speaker's decision to allow the cut motions to the Outstanding Demands was hailed by all sections of the House and the people at large.

Her concern about increasing the efficacy and smooth proceedings of the Question Hour has resulted in amending certain rules. According to new rules: (i) for giving notices of Questions, a uniform period of 15 days is prescribed by doing away with the minimum and maximum period of 10 and 21 days, respectively; (ii) the Hon'ble Speaker has been vested with powers to direct answer to a Starred Question of a member who is absent in the House when his name is called; (iii) a Minister is now required to make a Statement in the House correcting the reply given earlier,

irrespective of the fact whether the reply given to a Question was Starred or Unstarred or a Short Notice Question, etc.; and (iv) the number of notices of Questions which a member is entitled to give, both for oral and written answers, has been limited to 10.

As per the decision of the Hon'ble Speaker, Meira Kumar, a new procedure for raising matters of urgent public importance in the Zero Hour has been introduced with effect from 17 July, 2009. According to it, the members shall have to give notices in Parliamentary Notice Office either personally or through their authorized representatives from 0830 hrs. to 0900 hrs. on the day they desire to raise the issue in the House. Notices received after 0900 hrs. shall be treated as time-barred. Only twenty matters as per their priority in a ballot to be held, will be allowed to be raised on a day. The order in which the twenty matters will be raised, shall be decided by the Hon'ble Speaker at her discretion. In the first phase, five matters of urgent national and international importance, to be decided by the Chair, will be taken up after Question Hour and laying of papers, etc. In the second phase, remaining admitted matters of urgent public importance will be taken up after 6-00 P.M. or at the end of the regular business of the House.

On 5 November, 2009, the Speaker, Lok Sabha took a decision that whenever it is decided to treat the matter under Rule 377 as laid on the Table of the House, the following procedure will be followed with effect from 15 November, 2009.

In case, it is decided by the Chair that the matters under Rule 377 will be treated as laid on the Table of the House, an announcement shall be made by the Chair that those members who have been permitted to raise matters under Rule 377 on that day may send slips at the Table within 20 minutes. Thereafter, members who have been permitted and are desirous of laying their matters, may personally handover slips at the Table for inclusion of their matters in the proceedings of the House. Only those matters shall be treated as laid and shall form part of the proceedings for which slips have been received at the Table within the stipulated time. Matters under Rule 377 for which slips are not received at the Table shall not form part of the proceedings and shall be treated as lapsed. This procedure has been adopted to ensure that texts of those members who are absent from the House do not form part of the proceedings.

In pursuance of Rule 389 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Fourteenth Edition), the Hon'ble Speaker has made an addition to the Directions relating to last minute cancellation of the sittings of the Committees. According to the new direction, 'no sitting of a Committee shall be cancelled or preponed or postponed by the Chairman of a Committee by reason only of his absence from the sitting already fixed or his immediate non-availability for the sitting'.

Another important parliamentary development during Smt. Kumar's Speakership was the inauguration of a new Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management on 22 December, 2011 with the broad aim and objective to identify and discuss the problems relating to Disaster Management and for making members aware of the seriousness of the issues involved to enable them to adopt a result-oriented approach towards this critical issue.

In view of the deep respect Meira Kumar has for national leaders, she has initiated, floral tribute functions on the birth anniversaries of the former deceased Speakers of Lok Sabha in the Central Hall. She has unveiled portraits of former Prime Minister, Chandra Shekhar and national leader, Dr. Tristao De Braganca Cunha in the Central Hall and released books on Tridib Chaudhuri and Somnath Chatterjee brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Under her guidance, further revised and updated version of the publication of 'Kaul & Shakdhar's Practice and Procedure' of Parliament (English and Hindi edition) and 'Honouring National Leaders Statues and Portraits in Parliament Complex' were also published and an in-house Hindi magazine, 'Sansadiya Manjusha' was launched.

Conscious of the fact that the majestic Parliament House is not only a highly revered temple of democracy but is also a heritage building of great historical value, Hon'ble Speaker, in consultation with the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha, constituted a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Maintenance of Heritage Character and Development of Parliament House Complex under her Chairmanship on 15 December, 2009. It consists of thirteen members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, including the Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the Minister of Urban Development



and the Minister of Home Affairs as *ex-officio* Members and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources as special invitee.

A passionate environmentalist, Meira Kumar has encouraged the concept of a green Parliament Complex and has banned the use of plastic bags. Several steps have been taken to make the Lok Sabha Secretariat as paperless as possible. In August, 2011, she inaugurated a Solar Power Plant in Parliament House Annexe. This holds immense symbolic significance towards setting the standards for using environment-friendly energy. With the objective of preserving our bio-diversity, she has planted saplings of endangered plants like 'Kalpavriksha', 'Roheda' and 'Rudraksha' in the beautiful Parliament House gardens.

Committed to bringing Parliament closer to the people, Meira Kumar regularly invites persons with disability, children, senior citizens, women, members of Panchayati Raj institutions, volunteers of Sulabh, college students and children from remote areas, to the Parliament House where she enjoys interacting with them. She also conceived the idea of a special programme on LSTV titled 'Hamari Speaker—Our Speaker' to reach out to the school children wherein she is quizzed by students from various schools. This programme enables her to connect with the younger generation and explain to them the finer nuances of the functioning of the Parliament.

Meira Kumar's life outside Parliament has been a selfless quest for a just and inclusive society. She had been associated with (i) All India Samta Movement (also its Founder), 1992-2008, (ii) RVAKV Society Delhi (Institute of Blind Girls), 1992-98, (iii) Ravidas Smarak Society, Varanasi, 2000-06, and (iv) Jagjivan Seva Ashram, Sasaram, 2002-09; Chairperson, (i) Meera Kala Mandir, Udaipur, 2000-09, (ii) Jagjivan Ram Sanatorium, Dehri-on-Sone, 1986-2006, and (iii) Rajendra Bhawan Trust, Delhi, 2000-09; Managing Trustee, Jagjivan Ashram Trust, Delhi, 1985-2004; Member, (i) Senate, Patna University, 1969-71, (ii) Supreme Court Bar Association, 1986, (iii) Senate, Panjab University, 1987-91, (iv) Governing

Body, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1987-92, (v) Central Advisory Board of Education, 1987-90.

Meira Kumar's personality is a splendid convergence of art and social concerns. Her seldom mentioned literary and artistic accomplishments include painting and poetry. She also has a keen interest in contemporary history, fiction, Indian classical music and dance, local crafts and textiles. She is an accomplished rifle shooter and horse riding enthusiast.

Meira Kumar's unanimous election to the office of the Speaker, while historic, also gave new hope and direction to the principle of equality as enshrined in the Constitution of India. It sent out a strong message to the rest of the world that India was serious in its efforts to empower women and undo social inequalities.